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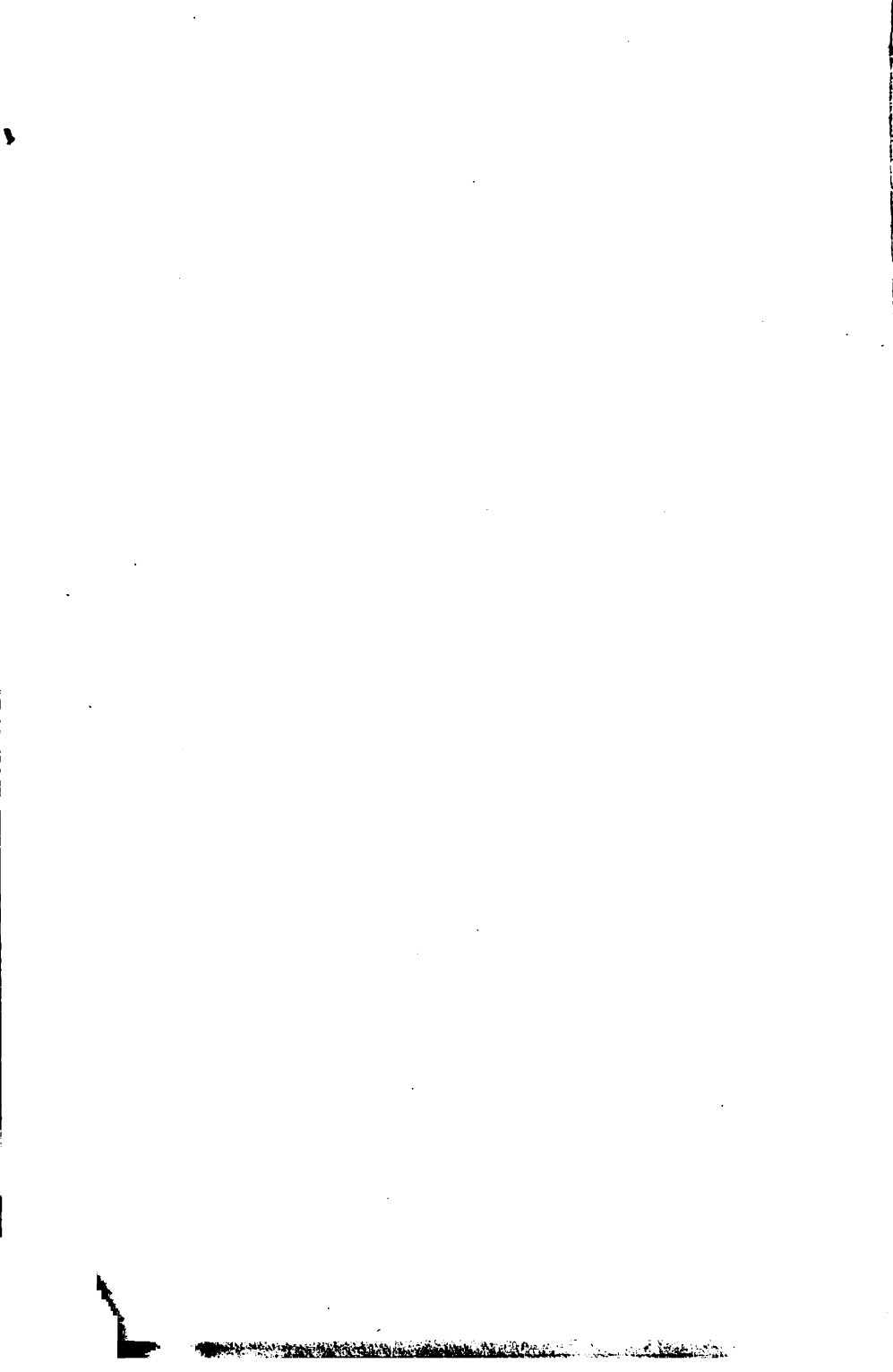
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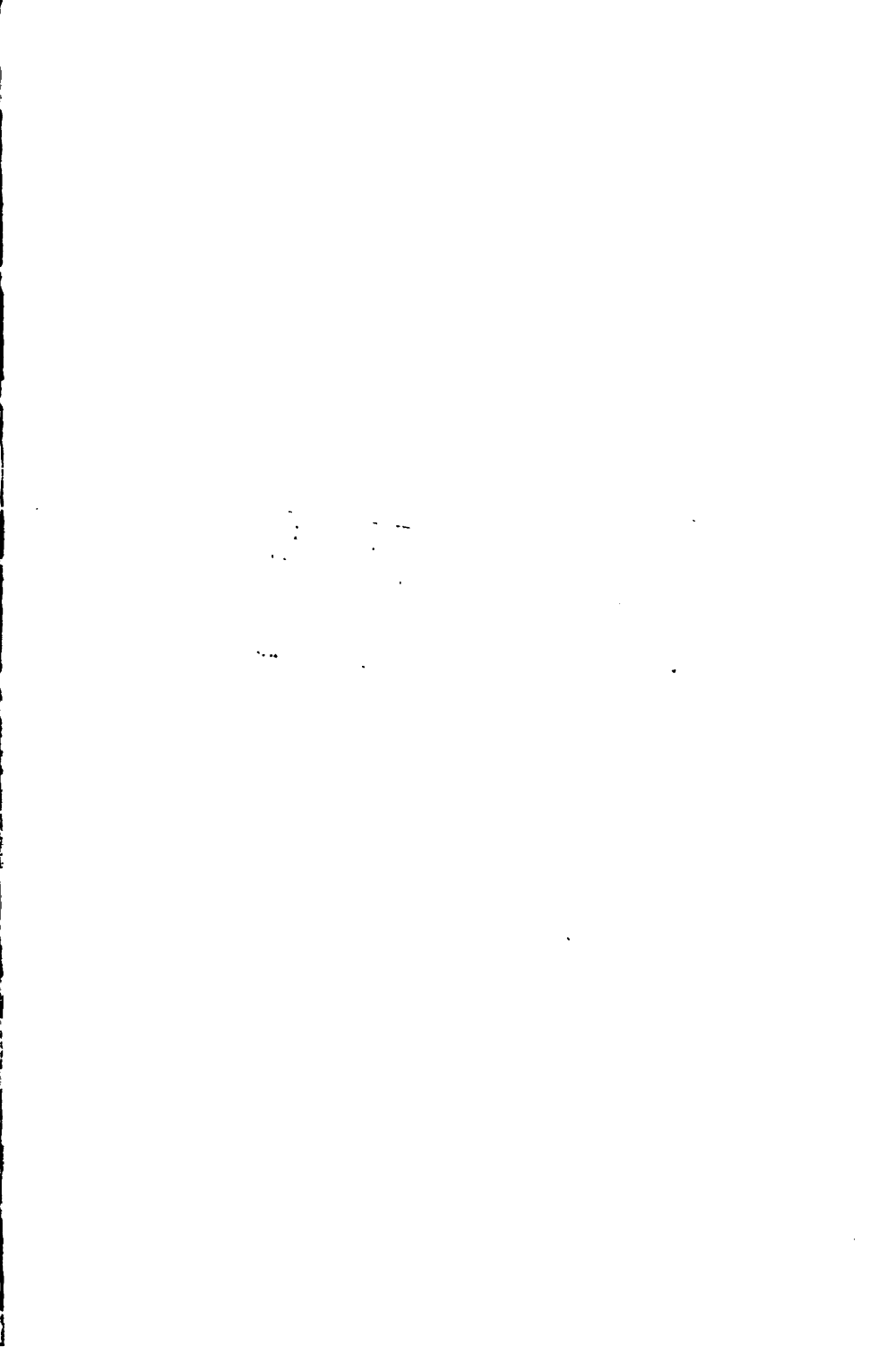
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# OUR HOUSEBOAT ON THE NILE

BY

LEE BACON

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM WATER COLORS*

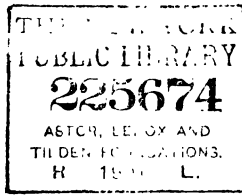
By HENRY BACON



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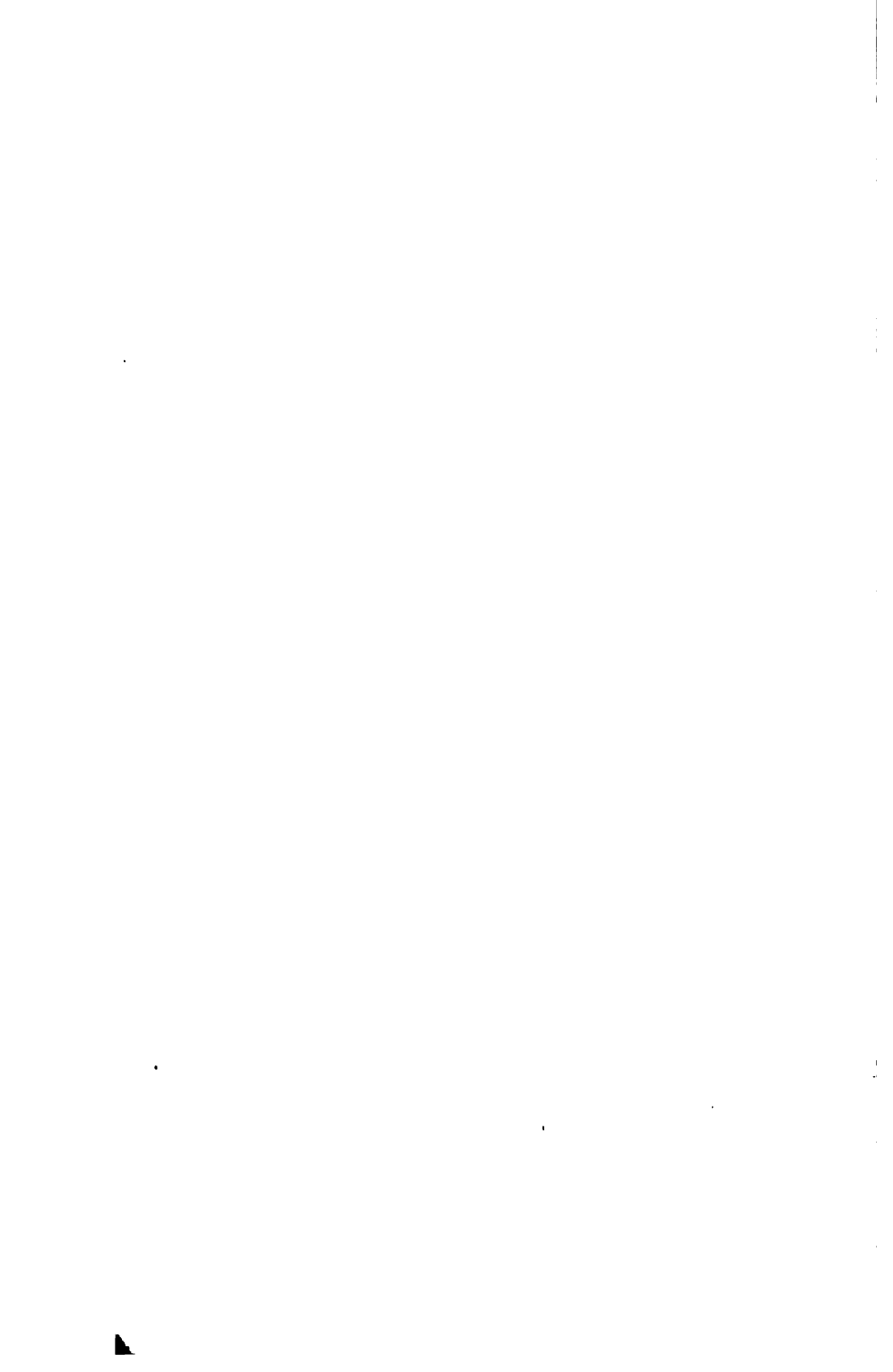
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# OUR HOUSEBOAT ON THE NILE

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## CHAPTER I

### THAT CONTRACT

Does it not seem a simple matter to engage a dahabéah? Any one would think that a letter or two, a telegram perhaps, a week's notice, and the payment of \$100 down would be all that was requisite to secure a houseboat; but he who tries to hurry in the East, to change Eastern ways and customs, little realizes that usage which goes back many centuries is much harder and higher to get over or break down than any stone wall.

We wished to set sail in December, and the only chance of succeeding was to begin treating the previous spring.

By July, with the assistance of an interpreter, we had hired a houseboat at Shellal

in which to make the trip to Wady-Halfa — between the first and second cataracts. In September a certain portion of the money on the boat was paid down, for this agent was a Luxor guide, an honest man, in whose charge is the Luxor cemetery, and ours was to be a self-conducted excursion; and any one honest enough to take care of a cemetery would be honest enough, we thought, to make the initial bargaining for a boat. This was not altogether a mistake; our man was not entirely false and faithless, only as inexperienced as we — and that was saying a great deal.

By the latter part of November we had reached Assouan, the scene of many a coming struggle in the way of getting that contract signed, but day after day slipped by before we could bring the owners of the boat, which had originally belonged to a native governor, to terms.

We should have had no trouble with the senior partner, a venerable, highly respectable, kind-faced old man, dignified in speech and gesture, and clad in the softest colors; but how different with the young, sleek, loud-voiced Egyptian, his junior partner,

who wore a gay galabeyah, and had lost a front tooth. With the first of them it would have been possible to get a fair return for our money, but with the second, who wished to get all he had a right to and much more, it was difficult to settle the conditions of time, details of crew, and so forth, for he was tricky.

The American way of saving time and talk is fatal in an Eastern business transaction — and Orientals have learned that we will pay much to save both.

They were to be paid by the month in advance, and one of the points to which the junior partner held was that if we ran but a few minutes into an extra month, the whole of that month must be paid for. When, however, he found that we had discovered his little ruse, and we told him that by a tip to his crew the reis (captain) would bring us back five minutes into a new month, he smiled broadly, and dismissed this special clause.

But the signing of the contract was a long and tedious affair. Several times the transaction seemed to be entirely off, at which moments we and our two interpreters retired



to one side of the deck — for the meetings were held on the deck of the houseboat in question — while the owners and their witnesses huddled against the opposite rail. Then gradually we would approach each other, and the parliament would resume the appearance of coming to a conclusion. This was repeated over and over again. Each step of the way, each line in the contract was in turn the subject of keen scrutiny and parley, for the wording of the contract had been left to us, and the owners seemed to suspect each clause of containing some mine which might later explode to their discomfiture.

The holding of our parleys on the houseboat itself reminded one of a coroner's jury sitting in debate upon an interesting case, for since there was no place at the hotel and no place at the simple homes of the owners, we were forced to run over on the railroad from Assouan to Shellal for each meeting. Did we say run? We should have said creep; for that railroad train across that six miles of desert has always the semblance of an animal creeping slowly up to his prey. It starts very quietly, and stealthily crawls along

between wastes of sand and around rock boulders, as if wishing to arrive unsuspected and unannounced.

We started out each morning with fresh courage, in the cool, lovely air, and came back dejected and tired in the high noonday sun.

At last one morning the fat, sleek young partner asked one of our interpreters if he thought he had got all he possibly could out of us, and on hearing that he had, he agreed to accept our terms. So we shook hands, touched our hearts all round, and separated.

But if we thought the affair over, we were mistaken; we forgot how an Easterner can retract and retreat. That very afternoon the session was reopened at Assouan. We talked the matter over separately, with only the interested parties, then seated on divans in the presence of the English vice-consul, then before some of the hotel officials. It was at length decided to refer all the points in question — and new ones seemed to arise every half hour — to the mudir of the village. But he could not be got at for a day or more; so the difficulties were finally

smoothed out by our dignified host of the Assouan Hotel. The settlement was advanced by well-placed compliments to the sleek young partner, such as "Sitt's" appeal to him to have the sailors of the crew "handsome men like yourself." When he was for demanding all the money in advance, we told him that rich men such as he and his partner appeared to be could have no real need of money in hand before the time stipulated in the contract. When he was for starting us off without the required number of blankets, a little appeal, "Would he let the Sitt be cold?" caused him forthwith to declare that they would all be forthcoming. And the contract was at last sealed and signed with characters of spider-spun thinness running from right to left across the page.

The questions of our fresh meat supply and our mail delivery were next in order, and these were settled by concluding to do almost without the former, and through a personal courtesy from the war office as to the latter. The manager of the Upper Nile mail service agreed, as a special favor, that its boats should slow up and lower the mail into our row-boat, which would be towed along by a

line while the mail and our weekly supply of bread were delivered.

But how we should put our mail aboard the post-boat on its down trip was a question he was not prepared to answer, for these boats fly along with the stream, and a small boat could not approach with safety. He advised leaving letters at some side river post-office.

This weekly passing of the post-boat will be our only glimpse of white faces for the next few weeks, for the river is this year so low that dahabéahs from the lower river cannot be got up the cataract.

When Miss Edwards anchored at Abou Simbel some thirty years ago, there were six or seven houseboats exchanging all the compliments of the Upper Nile season, but so far as we know, we shall have our Mecca, for such the temple of Abou Simbel really is, in all the grandeur of its isolation and loneliness.

Now it became known in the village that the Sitt was looking for some fine turkeys to take along for the voyage, at least two, one for Christmas and one for New Year's Day ; and a man arrived driving some splendid

birds before him, followed by a crowd of at least ten persons, who were to assist at the buying and selling.

It was, however, too much to expect that the bargain could be struck the first day. The turkey vendor held to his price and Sitt held to hers; he asked eight shillings for the two and she offered six. She might quite as well amuse herself in this as in any other way, for the crates and boxes of provisions and stores were still on their way up from Cairo, and the voyage could not begin until they arrived and were all aboard. It was quite dark when the turkey-man left the hotel, still driving those turkeys before him, and hoping, as he said in parting, that Sitt would give him his price in the morning.

## CHAPTER II

### MAKING HISTORY

As the Howadji smoked his pipe before the hotel door next morning, along came a lot of natives carrying officers' luggage and Soudan traps, closely followed by the hero of the late battle of Ombarakat — Wingate Pacha himself — with his aide-de-camp and the commandant of Assouan. The future Sirdar is in civilian's dress, but his aide-de-camp still in khaki uniform. It seems an incredibly short time since news came down of the capture and death of the Khalifa, and we feel that his head may well be in one of the tin boxes; but we are assured that this is not the case, and that he received suitable burial not far from where he fell.

“And what did you consider suitable burial?” we asked.

“A hole in the ground, while one of the officers looked on to see if the hole was deep enough.”

Though they say we are mistaken about his head being in one of the boxes, it is not long before his "gibbah" is spread out on the flagstones of the hotel court like a lion skin that some "big game" man might have brought in. The gibbah, the patched shirt of the Khalifa, in which he met his death, is of quite new white cotton cloth, the patches of colored stuffs sewn neatly here and there, in imitation of the patches upon the garment of an humble prophet. In the centre is the hole by which the bullet entered his breast, around are the spots of blood from the death wound, and that he must have fallen on his left side is proved by the blood having trickled down that side of this battle coat. For in a gibbah any fellah is in battle attire, while once out of his gibbah a soldier assumes the guise of a fellah.

This Assouan courtyard is often the centre of interest. The last exhibition we remember as taking place here was that of an immense fish of nearly a hundred pounds, caught in the cataract and hung here on a gibbet, the better for the hotel guests to examine his weighty presence.

On another occasion it was the luggage

and booty of some of the French officers returning from Fashoda, "on sick leave," they told us, bringing with them skins, and elephants' tusks, and more things than we can now remember ; but this year it is a few camp necessities and a few arms from the Soudan, that Soudan which is now open to European traffic and improvements, to modern and humane manners and customs. "Gordon is avenged," as Lord Salisbury puts it, and the outposts of civilization thrown hundreds of miles to the south, for the Khalifa and all Gordon's enemies, save the crafty Osman Digma,<sup>1</sup> who ran away to fight another day, are dead. They have paid that long-owed debt, and the hero, who lies in St. Paul's Cathedral, is even now less dead than they who have fallen but yesterday.

Our voyage up the Nile is happening in a historic year. It is the lowest Nile for hundreds of years ; it is the year of the opening of the Soudan ; and it is the year of the last long voyage of Menepthah, — the Pharaoh of the Exodus, — whose mummy has been lately taken down to Cairo from

<sup>1</sup> Osman Digma has since been captured and imprisoned.



the tomb at Thebes. He whose chariots and horses perished so long ago in the Red Sea has had a quiet sail down river in a bigger houseboat than he ever probably saw with living eyes.

## CHAPTER III

### SAILING SOUTH

AN important success has been achieved to-day : a cook has been engaged. Fortunes might be lost and won again while we discussed the cook, the cook's certificates of conduct, certificates of capacity, willingness, and honesty.

The question of what he could cook, of what others had wished him to cook, what we hoped he could, would, or should cook, left us with the dazed feeling that no cordon bleu was worth so many if's, and ah's, and la's. No one could have helped being tired out with the whole subject. No chef's best attainments were equal to what he said he could do, and all for three pounds sterling per month. Just as one has often wished to be as easily clothed as the lilies of the field, so now we wished to be fed by the ravens, like Elijah, or with manna, like the Israelites, even if the menu, like theirs, should be

the same each day. However, our caste in Upper Egypt society apparently depends on having a good cook, for the interpreter and others have shown more interest in this than in any other point of our preparations.

The longest lane has a turning, and the most minute preparations against shipwreck and starvation come to an end, and finally we find ourselves one afternoon, and Friday into the bargain, taking possession of our houseboat — still moored at Shellal opposite the island of Philæ. Bag, baggage, bundles, boxes, crates, and packages are at last on board. We are to sail early the next morning. At nightfall we observe the cook stealing away up the bank: we catch him just in time, and on being questioned he declares that he cannot sail without first going back to the village for his clothes. Now the village is some distance the other side of Assouan, so the Howadji refuses to listen to any such excuse, packs him back, and tells Alli, our “man Friday,” not to lose sight of him. Alli has his hands already full, for the camels from Assouan are arriving with firewood and charcoal, with crates filled with chickens, clay goulehs for water, potatoes,

onions, and petroleum, flatirons, lemons, and washing soda, blankets, traveling bags, and green-lined umbrellas. Have we laid in an undue quantity of coal and wood, or is it that camels carry less than their long legs and broad backs would indicate, and how can so many be needed to carry our impedimenta? As they thread their way toward us coming from one direction, a procession of natives draws near from the other, from the direction of the Shellal railroad sheds.

The stores from Cairo!

Every want in the coming weeks has evidently been anticipated; nor is a wish to be ungratified, for natives big and natives little bear along boxes big and boxes little,—the smallest native with the largest package, and each big six-footer with some tiny jewel-case of a parcel; small round kegs; large flat crates; boxes marked "Keep dry," others marked "Fragile."

All these ours? Impossible!

This is, indeed, traveling "en prince." Little wonder that gold sovereigns and paper fivers have melted away like wax in a candle flame. At least we have something to show for our lightened wallets, for we are bound

for six weeks along banks where supplies may not be renewed. To forget to-day is to go without for many a long day.

We are fairly overwhelmed with packages large and small — and all to be stored away before the short November day closes in. For there are no electric buttons at hand; candles and candlesticks are still packed up, and even empty bottles, which would have been acceptable as candlesticks, are hard to find. Later on we had no difficulty on this score, for of all places in the world for thirst, the Upper Nile is the greatest.

All worked with hammers and hatchets, and the cases were being gradually unpacked when an impudent fellow, accompanied by a local policeman, came aboard and began a dispute with the already much occupied Alli. The Howadji ordered him off the boat, but he was stupid enough to refuse to go until he had been turned around and kicked ashore with the policeman following him. So our troubles had already begun, for the two sat on the shore and demanded that Alli, whom they took to be a dragoman, should go with them to the officer of the post.

Now the Sitt was dragoman of this boat,

and Alli but a faithful dog of a servant from Cairo ; so the former sent them away, while they loudly repeated their demand that Alli should go with them. The unpacking continued for some ten minutes with success, and when ten men are unpacking, each five minutes is something gained. Soon, however, it was again interrupted, the two reappearing upon the shore, and calling out that "bockra," to-morrow, would not do, that Alli must come with them to-day.

"They say," translated Alli from behind a barricade of bottles and pantry requisites, "that if I come ashore they will arrest me." There was nothing to do, therefore, but for the Howadji to go with them to see the officer in command. He found a polite native lieutenant speaking a mixture of French and Italian, who explained that the native had made the charge that he had carried bundles to the houseboat for which carriage he had not been paid.

"And how much is it he says I owe him?" asked the Howadji.

"He claims that you owe him three piastres" (fifteen cents).

The Howadji paid the claim, and then

brought a counter-charge against the native and the policeman for coming aboard his boat without permission. The policeman was forthwith reprimanded, and told to arrest the native offender and carry him off, while the Howadji remained a minute to smoke a cigarette with the lieutenant, with whom he interchanged compliments and explanations.

But it had grown quite dark in these few moments, and the difficulty was to find the way back to the boat between the bazaars and palm-trees.

“Can you send a man to light me back?”

“Most certainly; and by the way, will you pardon the porter?”

Which question being amply answered by a wave of the hand, the lieutenant called the offending native from behind a pile of goods boxes, told him he was pardoned, and ordered him to light the Howadji back to his boat. So the torch-bearer received another piastre when he reached the daha-béah, and it was not until the Howadji was in his bunk that night that he came to realize that he had been done again, and to wonder how the native, the policeman, and the lieutenant had divided the three piastres. It

was such a small amount of backsheesh to cause so much trouble.

After examination it is found that matches and stamps are the only things which have been forgotten, and an early visit to the bazaars must be put through before we can weigh anchor and leave the friendly neighborhood of Cook & Son, of Pagnon, of civil hospital where drugs must be bought, and of government post-office where mail is made up.

Matches and stamps are now on board, and all waiting for the English mail, in which we hope there will be a bundle of letters and papers to take with us on our way. We had hoped to be off early in the morning, but since there is an English mail at noon we decided to wait, and carry off the late news from the seat of war in South Africa, with letters from friends at home; and, moreover, there is no wind; and, still further, the caulking of the small boat has not been finished.

As we sit on the deck opposite Philæ, we cannot help noticing how every aspect of the shores has changed in the last three years. Quiet then reigned on all sides: now there are derricks on almost every point of rock; bazaars for provisions, crockery, meat, and



bread; engineers' tents and camps; and blasting at noon and at nightfall.

Opposite Philæ are the government headquarters, a new post-office, a brigade, a hospital, a freight depot, and several yards where old boats are being repaired. The shops, of course, leave much to be desired, and among them all it is impossible to find a tin bucket. Any one needing a tin bucket had evidently done what we now do — bought an empty petroleum can, and by means of cutting, boring, and rope handle, improvised an exceedingly capacious, easily handled vessel. Ours was at once put to a very amusing use, for when, before leaving, the cook bought his eggs, he filled the bucket with water and tossed each egg into it. If the egg sank, it was deemed good, if it floated or threatened to float, it was given back to the hucksters — and what was worth noting, we do not think this test ever failed us.

The mail has scarcely been aboard five minutes when Sitt notices a little wind stirring in the tops of the palms, and the first noon blast has scarcely sounded when the reis is notified to untie our houseboat, for we are going.

The crew loafing on the bank, talking to a lot of native women, silently come aboard, the big sail is hoisted, and off we go amidst cheers from the shore and a perfect roar of artillery from the midday blasting. Our small boat drags along behind us, one side bright red, the other side to be painted later with indigo blue trimmings.

There is an old adage that too many cooks spoil the broth, but I hope our houseboat may prove an exception to this rule, for the tallest man on the boat is our cook, and the smallest human being aboard is the cook for the crew. We nearly miss seeing the sunset because of this little cook baking the griddle cakes for the men's supper. He is about eleven years old, and yet the swing with which he turns his fifteen-inch-in-diameter cakes is as clever as the casserole toss of a cordon bleu. He grinds his own corn, he pounds the wheat or other grain, adds flour or meal from a large sack, spreads the mixture on the griddle with his hands, which seem to stand fire as well as the salamander of fable renown, and serves an appetizing pile of these cakes to the ten men of the crew. There is one cake each — all of the same

size and thickness, one as brown as another ; even his own is in no way better than those he prepares for the others.

We sail until long after sunset, until it is quite dark, and then tie up somewhere near Kertassi, we are told. The boats which had followed us all day tie up behind us to the same bank, rather nearer than is agreeable, for the continued talking of their occupants is as disagreeable as the smoke of their fires. It is too dark to make it advisable to change our moorings, for their fires will soon be out and they as well as we soon asleep. But it is not till we are stretched for the first time in our bunks that we find, tired though we are, that sleep within the sound of the saqquia is an impossibility. In the shadow of one or more great trees, and always in a fertile tract, it is difficult to realize that anything so picturesque can be so vexatious, so teasing, so annoying as a saqquia. To quote from Charles Dudley Warner's description of a saqquia: "Over the well is a wheel, upon which is hung an endless rope of plain fibres, and on its outer rim are tied earthen jars. As the wheel revolves these jars dip into the well, and coming up discharge the water into a wooden



A WONDERFUL BUILDER OF GRIDDLE CAKES

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trough, whence it flows into channels of earth. The cogs of the wheel fit into another, and the motive power of the clumsy machine is furnished by a couple of oxen or cows, hitched to a pole swinging round an upright shaft. A little girl seated on the end of the pole is driving the oxen, whose slow, hitching gait sets the machine rattling and squeaking as if in pain. Nothing is exactly in gear; the bearings are never oiled, half the water is spilled before it gets to the trough; but the thing keeps grinding on night and day."

Thus it has gone on for thousands of years.

We send a sailor to the saquia driver with a bribe and orders to stop the machine during the night. He is gone a long time, and finally returns, saying that the driver is the slave of "big sheik" up in the village, and dares not stop.

"Why did n't you go to see the sheik?" asks the Howadji.

"He is very far away in the village."

"Then give me back the money."

"The driver kept it."

Here we have been done again, and nothing short of corporal punishment seems fit

to mete out to the sailor as well as to the saqquia driver.

And still the grinding, groaning, squeaking of the saqquia continues.

While we are feeling quite powerless, so far as bettering our condition is concerned, Alli comes into the cabin, carefully shutting the door behind him, and says, —

“When he change cows, I make him; I take big piece of Sitt’s soap, never you mind.”

An hour later there is a lull; we heave sighs of relief and guiltily wonder what has happened up at the saqquia; but soon we fall into sound sleep, and know nothing until the sun is about rising, when we hear excited voices above us on the shore with excited replies from some one on our lower deck.

The Howadji slips into ulster and slippers and goes forth to find Alli quietly dusting about in the saloon, and the crew busied in poling off from shore, leaving an excited crowd gesticulating and yelling, and apparently accusing the crew of something they indignantly deny.

The sheik and his servants we find have come down from the village above, fearing

that some accident had happened to the saquia, and are looking for the man who soaped the wheel, thereby causing the groaning to cease. We feel that an international episode may have been avoided by the rapidity with which the reis gets that boat into mid-stream.

We made about twenty-five miles the first day, but had been so busy in storing ourselves away in our houseboat that we had no time for scanning even cursorily the landscape on each side; and now we are about to pass through the Gate of Kalabshy, where the narrowed river runs between walls of rock of such weird color that Doré could have well chosen it for one of his more gruesome pictures. The rocks would deceive a casual observer, who could see many resemblances to volcanic deposit, dark slate and black boulders cut into seams and ridges by the water as it rushes through at high Nile, while others are exactly the color of the famous bronze water-carrier of the Naples Museum. It is a strangely picturesque spot, with villages climbing up and down the slopes. Outside the houses are rows of great sun-dried jars, higher than a man's head, for



holding grain, which from the river look like huge sacks standing in line, like that into which Ali Baba was thrust when fairy tales were realities. We have ample time for taking in every detail, for the light morning wind has dwindled to the gentlest of zephyrs, and instead of drawing strongly through this narrow gorge speeds lightly, while we recall different points on the sail up the Saguenay River, and compare the heights of the various points with the rock of Edinboro town.

Behind the headlands one catches sight of patches of green and occasional slopes of brilliant yellow sand, slipping and running down into the flats just as the glaciers of Switzerland run down the mountain sides; while the latter look hard and gray, these have all the brilliancy of gold and the softness of loose sand.

The river is gradually cutting into the left bank, to the great danger of luxuriant palms, eating the very life away from them, and leaving them with projecting roots and nothing to support their long, heavy trunks and wind-swept tops. The guide-books tell us nothing about the two islands on which we see interesting ruins, and we feel that

perhaps this may be our chance for making some discoveries of our own ; but the reis is rather discouraging ; by a shrug of his shoulders the positive assertion, "Mafeesh anti-qua," conveys the information that they are Roman remains, nothing but ruins perhaps a thousand or fifteen hundred years old, which in Egypt is but yesterday, and of no interest to specialists or excursionists ; and, therefore, he judges, of none to us.

A few minutes later even the gentle zephyr leaves us in the lurch, and the calm is so entire that the Howadji begins his first sketch of Upper Nile ; in place of wind and rippling waters we have lovely reflections, which make a painter's opportunity.

As we lie becalmed, a procession of women come down from some little hamlet behind the rocks to fill their water jars at the river's brink. Their sweeping gowns are a shade lighter than the mud of the river bank, and as they come, winding their way between the almost black rocks and boulders, the gold rings in their noses glint in the sun, rings as large as those in the average Italian chromo.

Little children run by their side, the boys in a state of nature and the girls with little

hip fringes, quite sufficient clothing for this region, where we find the heat greater even than at Assouan. If the Tropic of Cancer is thus in December, what must it be when His Majesty Sol favors this special spot with his direct attention at the summer solstice?

Women alongshore are busying themselves working around and about thorny henna bushes, from which they are picking berries. The bushes are as green as the juice of the berries is red, and are not unlike vineyards in certain parts of France.

Before going ashore for a walk we busy ourselves about some houseboat details; for houseboats need as much attention as other kinds of houses. We have n't measured ours yet, but some day we shall, and can then be explicit and intelligible on all the minor points of our two saloons, one fore and one stern; our two decks, the upper for us and the lower for the crew; our mainsail, with its sweep one hundred and fifty feet long, and our stern sail; our Stars and Stripes from the flagstaff and our pennant which floats from the end of our big yard; our kitchen in the bow and the crew's kitchen on the

lower deck ; our four little cabins, well-filled storehouse, and ship's pantry.

The cabin carpet is bright red Brussels, with such large flowers that one bouquet is sufficient to fill the saloon and part of the passageway, while there is enough blue chintz with yellow fringe at all the cabin and saloon windows to smother us, or to open a second-hand furnishing establishment. The couches or sofas of the saloon are so high that we are forced into the Eastern cross-legged attitude in order to sit on them at all, and after we are all seated — for there are only two of us — there is room left in one of the sofa corners for our library of about twenty volumes, while in another are wraps, hats, opera-glasses, and all the things which are needed a hundred times each day. There are no shelves to put anything on, and no time to put things away or to get them out, for one can take cold while going for a wrap when the wind changes, and the slowest one-legged ibis grows another leg and two wings and flies away while you get a glass to examine him the better. It is no use having St. Galmier or whiskey and soda put away, for the former is kept on tap, and so many empty

quart bottles marked St. Galmier are thrown overboard each day that an onlooker who did not see the label would be scandalized.

The upper deck of our houseboat is a delight ; it is like a roof with an awning spread over it. All day long the sun keeps it bright and attractive, and at night the lights from the saloon below shine up through the nettings and colored glass of the skylight. The sofas and tables of the deck are covered with Eastern cotton draperies, which are well fastened at the corners, for otherwise the sudden gusts of wind would snatch them away without warning. The rugs spread upon the deck are heavy enough to take care of themselves, and the boxes of plants and palms will last us our time aboard, and beyond that we refuse to interest ourselves.

Along the deck side are bound the great sweeps which will come into use on the down trip, for the poet says, —

“The way to Egypt is long and vexatious.”

There are several companionways leading from the lower deck and saloons to the upper deck, and we often wonder how many

times we go up and down these steps each day.

When coming on board, Sitt wondered how she should keep herself amused. How-adj, of course, has his work. Though it would be difficult to tell what she has to occupy her, each day slips away, and there is never a moment of wearisomeness.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT WE LEARN

WHY not pass these moments while waiting for the wind ashore, in a scramble up the banks and along some of the paths? It has been more than twenty-four hours since we were on dry land. The idea seems excellent, and we act upon it. We dare not go far, for there are at last signs of wind, and we must move on when we can.

We are no sooner on shore than a native approaches us from a field near by carrying a large knife, with red morocco case. He does not come with murderous intent; he only hopes to find a purchaser for his weapon. Before he reaches us, he is intercepted by Alli.

“Sowereen?” (travelers), the native queries.

“La, nohandis” (engineers), answers Alli.

And without another look in our direction the fellah goes back to his seed-sowing, for

the word "nohandis" means to him people who come up or down the river on government or other business. The natives respect and fear those who come to measure or to count, to levy or collect taxes, or to survey; they are, moreover, never purchasers of the so-called "antiquas."

The wind having now come, we cannot stop at Kalabshy to see the temple ruins and explore the village; the outlines of many points look interesting from the river, and there is page after page about its attraction in "A Thousand Miles up the Nile," as well as in other guide-books of this region. But we are sure to come back this way; so we decide to push on.

The villagers have not thought such a course on our part possible, and have come from far and near to see us disembark. They have weapons, bracelets, rings, and strings of beads for sale, and stare with open eyes and mouths at us. They finally take position like a band waiting for a Captain John Smith, all in a row, — and their equanimity at our going perhaps arises from the fact that they, too, know we must come back this way.



One who did not pause to watch us was a small boy whose occupation was to run up and down the pole of a shadoof. When the bucket at one end of the pole was to be dropped, he ran to that end; when the bucket was to be lifted, he ran along the bare pole to the other end. Lots of things like levels, fulcrums, etc., came to Sitt's mind, but whether the small boy was serving as one or another of these long-forgotten things, she could not now be sure. Whatever he was, the business in hand was more important to him than a close inspection of us, and we marked him down as one of the few to whom our coming and going was not of paramount importance.

Our crew wear blue jeans trousers drawn on a string, with a loose shirt of blue outside, and a waistcoat of striped silk is allowed to hang from the shoulders. Their legs are bare, and when their feet are not bare they are covered with red morocco slippers, while their heads are muffled in various white or red or yellow wrappings, according to the time of day. Early in the morning their heads are entirely lost in these swaddling bands, while at high noon they come down



REIS MOHAMMED

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to first principles and wear cotton skull-caps.

Their names are a constant source of amusement; "Nasoof," meaning "good-looking," is the blackest of the pack; "Sais," which means "happy," seems always to have a grievance, and to be anything but what his name implies; "Fadder," which any one can tell means "silver," is the poorest looking; while "Dahab," meaning gold, is the best of the lot.

Our reis is very suitably named Moham-med, "prophet" or "leader." Others have no names in particular, and seem to answer to any. Some are amiable, and do not only their own work but others'; some continually shirk, even to the point of dropping away from the towing-line to say their prayers on the edge of the stream. While these pray the willing ones work, and rare it is to have an out and out row. They do not seem to feel extremes of heat and cold; they are in and out of the water, and in and out of the sun, with composure; which to us of the North would be almost unbearable.

As we have moved south, we have frankly done away with collars and cravats at high

noon, and yet require all kinds of extra wraps for night or dawn. The crew are gradually dispensing with one garment after another, and are almost in primitive drapery at midday. Clothes do not form an important item in a Nubian yearly account, for the garment in daily use is washed out on going to bed and put on again the following day.

We are making good headway and coming gradually to a point opposite a whitewashed building which has been for some time in sight. As we approach, a man, who has been lying on the bank, gets up and unlocks the door of the whitewashed house, evidently expecting a visit from us ; for this is our first Nubian post-office. We are, however, so taken with the love of sailing before the wind, a condition which has been held up to us as an ideal one, that we continue on our way while he stands waiting.

Later in the day we have a chance to stop at a place called "Taffey," but since we are sure that this Taffey never came to our house, we feel no obligation to return his visit, and again glide by.

We have been learning much in the last

several days, not the least that the simplest stop of but a few minutes causes entire demoralization among the crew, and that when one is lucky enough to have a good wind here, he had better push on. It may be, too, some ambitious strain in our American nature that gives us the desire to push on, to forge ahead to the end rather than to linger along road or river.

The want of variety in our bills of fare is, alas! due to Sitt's limited knowledge of Arabic and the Arab cook's attainment in English. We go to market each day — in the storeroom, where Armour's sliced bacon, dried tongues from Cairo, potted jams from England, tinned fruits from California, stand ranged in line. Sitt feels as if her baby days had come back, and with them the delights of having dolls who come to shop in her grocery store. There is no lack of stores or in their variety, but the lack is in her capacity to explain her simplest wishes. One meal will get mixed with another, and what seems to have been misunderstood for one is sure to be served up at the next. The best arranged menu will get muddled, and the "bowsprit get mixed with the rudder."

## CHAPTER V

### A RUNAWAY GHIASHA

IT is on Sunday morning, the first Sunday in Advent, that we find there has been a murder on board. It might have been worse, but again it need not have happened at all. To make a long story short, our big hedgehog, who should have known better, has killed our little hedgehog; the remains, which were thrown into the river, were figuratively and literally remains, for the old savage had eaten portions of his poor little confrère.

We had bargained for those two hedgehogs over the railing of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, and they had been Alli's chosen companions all the way up the river. Why did we want hedgehogs on a dahabéah? Nothing more nor less than that they are supposed to eat water-bugs, and since we had heard long accounts of these domesticated animals, we bought the antidote before we

had the disease. But we bought ourselves no end of trouble with that pair of hedgehogs, for once it was known about the Sharia El Gamel that we were buying such things, vendors of all kinds of small animals beset our path. We were importuned to buy scorpions, a mongoose, while tame snakes, small birds, and monkeys were fairly thrust into our faces. Nor did it stop there. If we were known to buy small animals, why should not stuffed ones interest us as much as live ones? Stuffed alligators and small crocodiles were soon in line. The owners could not be made to understand that we were not making a collection of animals, alive and stuffed, as well as of reptiles and vermin.

Egypt is a land of collectors, and these traders reasoned, perhaps, that if some collect pieces of old and apparently worthless pottery, why should not some others also collect animals and reptiles?

So far as our hedgehogs were concerned, they were not a success beyond amusing us by hunching up their backs and rolling themselves into balls at the sound of a human voice. They never learned to distinguish our tenderest caress from an enemy's attack,



and they were pointed in resenting advances of any kind. Sitt never quite understood the force of the expression "to bristle up," and to "get one's back up," until she owned these hedgehogs. They were forever getting lost in the cabins, but so soon as night came they would trot about, and scratch about, until the hedgehog remedy was worse than the water-bug disease. Now that the little one was no more, we gave his murderous big brother to the reis, on condition that he should be put on shore or kept in the sailors' quarters.

This will be in many ways a memorable Advent Sunday, for there is not a ripple on the river, the reflection is marvelously clear, the sky cloudless; and the silence Sitt decides to be the greatest she has ever heard; or so at least she confides to Howadji, for the Irish blood in her veins will occasionally assert itself. There is no twitter of bird, no hum of bee, no buzz of insect, not the least sound of any kind.

Some days the sailors are a bit noisy; at other times an occasional voice reaches us from alongshore, and a teasing saqquia breaks the silence; but we sail so quietly, and the

occasional mud huts and houses on the land are so exactly the color of the earth from which they have been made and with which they are surrounded, that we feel as if we are the only living things about; only by the use of strong field-glasses are these objects discernible; perhaps in bygone days, when dervishes were abroad, it was no small advantage, mind you, to be overlooked.

What is surprising us hourly is that each day has its changes and variety; if these are not inside our houseboat, they are outside. With but two banks and one river it is astonishing how continual is the change — a trick of nature, you may say: for with but two eyes, one nose, one mouth, and two ears, how differing are human countenances.

We dressed ship this morning, and sofas and tables are covered with gay toiles de Gène. We are apparently followed by a flotilla of ghiashas, for the reflections of their prows and sails convert what are in reality but four cargo-boats into double that number. Their tall sails, over a hundred feet high, sweep all in one direction, ready to catch any stray breeze from the hills hard by, and each outline of prow, sail, and yard is mirrored in

the unbroken surface of the river. If ever reflections were clearer and stronger than the objects of which they were the reflections, these are they. Before midday the men, who have been poling during most of the morning, give over work, tie our houseboat up to the bank, and gather about their Sunday dinner. It is not served in courses or on a white cover, but from a great bowl, from which each in turn takes a dip. Was ever sauce so good as the appetite each brings with him, and were ever sweetbreads so good as this bean stew?

The ghiashas are likewise tied up to await the wind; each crew settles itself about a similar bowl of refreshment, and as each man has his fill, he throws himself full length upon a ledge of the hard bank and is soon snoring lustily.

Howadji thinks that a sketch, even one at midday, would be a pleasing souvenir of this wondrous day, so he settles to work, with his faithful Alli hard by, keeping the sun off by means of an immense sketching umbrella, and the flies off by means of a limber fly-brush of split palm, which he plies diligently and silently.

The group of ghiashas cannot be improved upon as a foreground, nor the violet gray mud-bank indented by the river as the setting. Sitt hovers around, knowing that after the first drawing is over she can chatter away to her heart's content without fear of hurting the sketch, which is sure some day to be hers; for there will never be time to finish it, and since she makes a specialty of unfinished things, she will claim this as her due.

Sure enough her presentiments are nearer right than they generally are, for an hour is scarcely gone when, without a word of warning, one of the ghiashas, which had a moment before been lying so lifeless and helpless, is more than alive, and absolutely makes its escape into deep water before the sleeping crew is aware of what is happening. The wind has come, and though the crews may have time to go sleeping on, the ghiasha seems to feel it must be off.

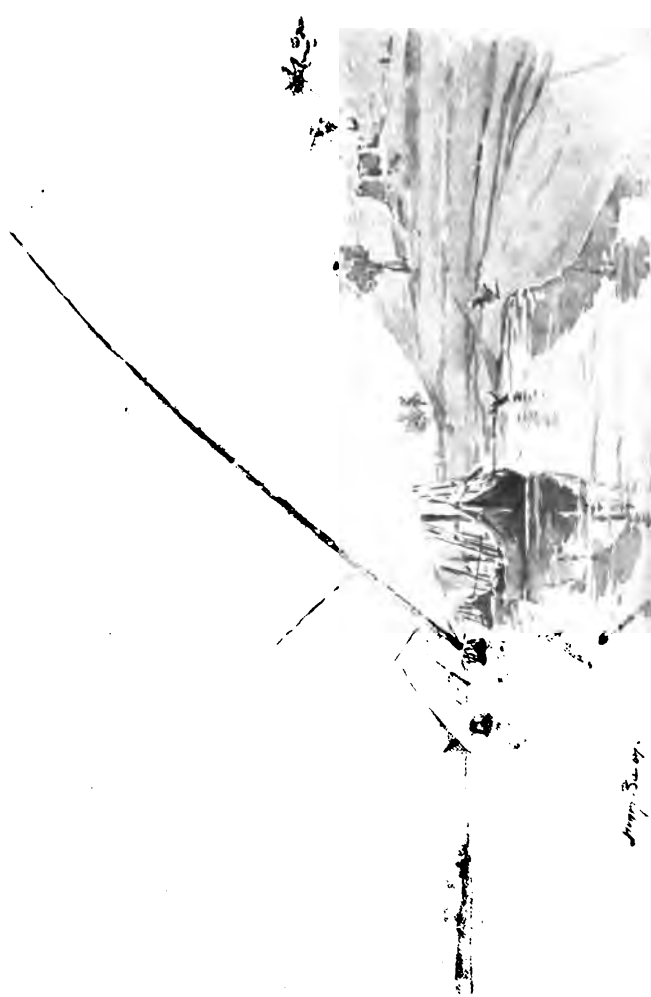
There is a rush into the river, and before the awakened men get beyond their depth, or have more than half their waking senses, the runaway has been recaptured, the yards made fast, and the rudder put about. It is as she predicted to herself, Howadji's

sketch will never be finished, for the foreground is thus broken up, and before he decides what to do, our Stars and Stripes floats gayly out with this new breeze, and we too must be off.

That a breeze can so quickly affect the face of all nature is surprising. The stately palms not only flutter with these caresses of zephyrs, but give forth little rustlings of delight. The shouts of surprise and joy from the men of the various crews are so loud that from a high rock, halfway up the hill, appears a small donkey on which is perched a real live Nubian policeman in red tarboosh and khaki breeches — quite the “dudiest” thing we have seen since leaving Philæ.

Within fifteen minutes we are all under way; even the runaway ghiasha, which lost his head, — for even a ghiasha can do that sometimes, — has fallen into line, and all are wondering what point on the map can be gained that evening, and to what spot we can move our tiny little flag, which marks off each day’s run just as if we were an Atlantic racer or an ocean greyhound.

Our Stars and Stripes at the stern is bristling with importance, and has n’t even time



THE RUNAWAY GHIASHAS

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for fluttering, but is standing straight out, leaving the grace and fluttering to be done by our fifty-foot pennant. When we paced off fifty feet in the Cairo flag bazaar and ordered our pennant that length, we felt it must often lie upon the deck at our feet; but little we knew, for we find it now slightly more than half the length of the canvas mainsail from whose end it floats, and we could have spread ourselves still more by ordering it many feet longer. Our plain field of blue is more than six feet, and from that floats away a red and white streamer. We had n't time for deciding upon a device for that blue field, but we have the comfort of having more stars in the evening sky than could have been crowded upon any flag. For leaving poetry, romance, and exaggeration aside, we have never seen such stars as in these heavens above Nubia. Constellation after constellation, the names of which we do not even know, send forth so much light that the evenings are as glorious in their way as the Nubian sun is by day.

It is so early in the winter that we may not see the Southern Cross for some days to come, and then only at the horizon for a few



minutes after sunset. Later in the winter even Philæ is crowned with its beauty, and in the spring those who linger in Luxor have it at the best.

We have never decided upon a name for our boat. Though she has belonged to several owners and made many voyages on pleasure or business, with Europeans and with natives, she still belongs to the no-name series. When we made that twenty-five mile run the first day south of Philæ, we were for painting upon her bows "The Hare." Howadji was to be the house-painter and Sitt the designer of the lettering, but the runs — or walks — of the last two days have been in such dire contrast to the first that we feel as if she should be called "The Tortoise;" up here, however, a tortoise would be sure to be taken for a scarab or beetle, and that would put us under the head of "antiquas."

We who have been first all day long are now last, but there are to us many things more important than winning, for towards four o'clock the sky becomes a wondrous blue, and as the sun sinks — for it now sets at 5.30 — the sky pales, and the tints upon hillside and rock become more brilliant until the entire landscape is nothing short of golden.

## CHAPTER VI

### TRACKING

It appears to have been telegraphed up river by word of mouth that we are engineers ; for such we were announced to be in contradistinction to travelers and tourists. We have, day by day, proofs of how wise this course was, for no one disturbs us, no one expects anything of us, and we have to all intents and purposes the whole country to ourselves.

This morning we landed at Dendur. Though the sun was high and it was past seven o'clock, the natives still lay asleep on numbers of benches which were in the shade of a big tree near a large mosque. Each man was wrapped in an immense cotton quilt, and scarcely opened an eye to see us pass. We had no way of knowing whether they were the grandees of the village, or were natives sleeping at the expense of the municipality, but the sight was none the less unusual.

Yes, they seemed to know that there was

nothing to be made out of us, and so did not bestir themselves. It is often strange how information is passed up or down this river Nile. Like all who know not how to read or write, these Egyptians have wonderful memories; no detail apparently escapes their notice and their memories.

A few years ago it was learned up the river that a certain man farther down was forwarding arms and ammunition to the Dervishes. A war-office steamer was dispatched to apprehend him. But the news flew faster than any steamer, and when the boat neared the bank, the culprit stood awaiting the officers. He had in some way been informed that all had been discovered, and may have hoped for leniency from giving himself up. The pursuing authorities had not dared to telegraph, for fear the news would get about, but with all their precaution, it had flown fast. What were the details of the trial and committal? We never heard, but once when coming up river we were on the boat which was bringing this culprit — then a pardoned prisoner — back to his native village; and we furthermore recollect that we did not sleep all night because of the noisy

rejoicing of his friends and relatives on again seeing their townsman after a term of years in gaol. The Khedive had in truth pardoned him and released him when but half of his ten years' sentence had been served.

In this connection can also be cited the case of an American doctor on his way up Nile in a dahabéah, who, when but a few days started on his journey, examined and prescribed for a poor fellow suffering with an affection of the eyes; from that time on, all the way up river, the halt, maimed, and even the blind gathered on the bank to ask for the hayakim who was on board.

Our big saloon serves as dining-saloon, gentlemen's smoking-saloon, a ladies' sitting-room, library, and writing-room. When we sit in the middle it is for meals; when we sit in one corner we can easily reach all the volumes in our thirty-volume library; when we sit in another corner we are geologists, handling and marking strange bits of stone, and specimens of potsherds. When we go to one end of the saloon we are in our armory, with its one revolver and two guns to hand; while still another corner is the hat and cloak department and wrap centre,

in which there is quite a varied selection. Another corner is reserved for a bottle of good Kentucky whiskey and some eau gazeuse. Another side looks as if the aim of our voyage was to collect botanical specimens, for here we have henna-berries, castor-oil beans, small green gourds, the vegetable ivory of the dôm palm, and a branch of doorha, which looks just like the wand which Bacchus had often in hand.

We have been tracking all day, and against a head wind, and have surely by this time made three miles, — as well as a discovery that we have been again swindled by that now faraway owner of the houseboat. Our contract called for ten able-bodied men, and now that the occasion arises when we need all ten, we find that we are two and a half men short. The other half of the man we left behind is the little cook, who in reality is wonderful in his line, but would count for nought on the end of our line tracking 'longshore. Another man is a broken-ankled, bandy-legged, one-sided, short-sighted, thin, broken down old fellow of sixty — and when a Nubian is sixty, he looks two hundred. The sailors have put this specimen of human-

ity at the forward end of our tow-line; he who is pace-setter and head-tracker is hardly able to stagger along fast enough to keep the rope between him and the next in line taut. We suppose their idea is that when in the fore he will at least have to carry the rope, while if he were in the midst, they would have to drag him along as well as his end of rope. We see a distinct likeness between him and the reis; although the captain will not own him as a relative, we feel sure that the old man is his great-great-grandfather, or some first cousin's uncle's brother once removed. We are only sorry that he was not removed farther still before we started with such a fifth wheel.

Where have our eyes and wits been not to have sooner discovered that the men are short in number and weak in capacity? The Howadji was busy with ideas of sketching and painting, was 'way up in that painter's paradise where it was impossible to descend to the point of examining each sailor as if he were conscripting them for an army; and Sitt has been busy with the Arab language and the culinary art as understood and capable of explanation in Arabic. Perhaps it was the

wind's fault that we did not sooner discover the boat-owner's treachery, for it blew so lustily for the first thirty miles from Shellal that it seemed to promise to do all the work; but now that we are at a sharp turn in the river and a corner is to be got round with wind dead ahead, this weakness of the crew is no joke.

The little cook leaves his griddle-cakes in favor of the rudder, while the reis, whose place is at the helm, is at the bow of the boat, and with a pole keeps its nose from going into the rocks; for when pulled by a rope 'longshore, with the current running swiftly round a corner, it is more than can be expected of the best houseboat to keep from running towards shore each five minutes of the way.

Who is the ancient historian who says, "The wind always blows from the north, carrying us upstream with sails filled"? History is not repeating itself on this occasion, for we have not had a north wind for days, and never knew how strong or steady it can be until we began weeks later our downward voyage of floating against a steady blow day after day.



TRACKING





There is but one difficulty about our amusing ourselves with our shot-guns, and that is that we have seen scarcely anything to shoot. One beautiful kingfisher, which it would have been a pity to molest, and a little black irma have been the only flying things we have sighted. The irma reminded us of a Cairo donkey-boy, for he was black all over, with the exception of a white top-knot which suggested a cotton skull-cap. He, in his innocence, went so far as to hop along a gun-barrel and look down the muzzle, — innocent young thing to play with fire; this time he did n't get hurt, but some time he may.

There seems to be a lamb in distress somewhere on shore; though invisible he can be distinctly heard, as we move along at a rate of about a mile an hour. No wonder we cannot see him, for when Alli is called, he tells us that the lamb is in our own hold; that he was bought last night by the crew, who are to fatten him on the voyage and kill him at Wady-Halfa. How old will he be before we reach that haven, going at the rate of one mile an hour? and which of the stores in our storeroom will be considered most desirable for fattening him?

The little cook has a bright face and active body, has very white teeth which match the white of his cotton skull-cap, has a silver ring in the top of his ear; and he proves to be the son of the reis. In the evening, among the men, while Awassa plays the tom-tom, his is always the loudest voice, and he is ahead of rather than behind the measure. He sews at odd intervals during the day; the inside of his cotton skull-cap serves for work-basket, for from its inside binding he brings needles and cotton. He does as much work in one day as our six-foot cook — who wears a fine cashmere shawl bound about his head as a turban, and whose certificate avows him to be of good family, and as “honest as they go” — does in four.

Such different menus from the two kitchens! From ours, which is far forward and has a brick oven and places for four separate fires, we have had at different times very good chops, bacon and eggs, chicken, bread pudding, macaroni and onions — not à la crème, but à la condensed milk — bien entendu. From the native’s kitchen we have seen durra bread, hard-boiled eggs, beans, coffee, — which from its odor was some of

our Java and Mocha mixture, — and several strange combinations whose derivation defies description.

The wind has come, the trackers tumble aboard, kuz goes back to his griddle-cakes, and the reis squats silently beside the tiller, while we slip along for a few miles. The tired men are not half rested when the wind again proves faithless, and we tie up at Gerf Husēn, where we have a village and a temple to amuse us, but where the heat is something appalling. The inside of the temple is simply impossible. Whether it is the lack of wind, or some special quality in the atmosphere, this remains in our log as the hottest afternoon we have so far had in Nubia.

The women and children, and in fact the whole village, turn out to see us. The hyakim left his experiments in chemistry, or whatever else it is that Nubian doctors affect, to have a look at us, and questions Alli as to our derivation and destination. The women even offer to sell us their nose-rings; and as to their tin rings and bracelets, they appear to wish to present us with them. The children are in a state of nature, or clad in little hip fringes. The women

are good-looking, and no longer wear the almost universal black outer garment, but instead khaki-colored cotton gowns — and not a little smirched with dust. There seems to be a difference between this and many others of the hamlets, but wherein the difference lies we cannot tell. They follow us to the boat's side; and they must think that though we cannot boast so venerable and important a hyakim as they, we have some power of magic on board, for as we reach our gangplank a real wind springs up, and in a few moments we are sailing more gayly than for many hours past.

There are as many as twenty sails following in our wake: barges laden with coal for Wady-Halfa, and many with house-frames, presumably for the new city of Khartoum.

The sailors exchange greetings and news with the crews of all the up-going and down-coming craft, with all those aboard the ferry boats which cross the river at various points. It seems as if the decrepit little ferry boats were sailed across just at a moment when we can be spoken and questioned; and we notice that all along this stretch of the river the greeting, when ashore, is a hand-shake,

— similar to a good English hand-shake, — and quite unlike the various native manners of salutation.

A stern-wheel steamer, towing two army supply boats lashed to her sides, comes into sight, but the wind is so steady that for two hours it fills our sail to such good purpose that she gains little on us; but with the sun down goes the wind, and the Egyptian tug-boat pushes on, while we are left to tie up at Dakkeh. As she passes, we watch her men haul down the Egyptian star and crescent, then turn away to the other side of our boat to see just above us in the sky the most wonderful new moon with a star exactly in the centre; such a silver thread of a moon and such a brilliant diamond of a star that we no longer wonder at its being the national emblem of Egypt. We seem to be living through one

“ of those sweet nights

When Isis, the pure star of lovers, lights  
Her bridal crescent o'er the holy stream.”

The ghiashas have the start this morning, and Howadji hurries up the leisurely old reis, who avers as an excuse that he thought we wished to visit the temples, but we ex-

claim, "Mafeesh temples," and after setting the wheels of the houseboat machinery going, Howadji retires for a late morning nap, promising himself a sketch of the man at the helm later in the day. Thus we are blown away from Dakkeh to read up about its temples, and to digest the history of the great Roman victory over Candace and her Ethiopian subjects, which took place at this spot. We are surely becoming demoralized thus to skip a battlefield and a temple; but sketches and everything else give way when there is a fair wind.

We must keep on deck all day to show outwardly and constantly our determination to get to Abou Simbel as soon as possible. Even the sketch of the Arab at the tiller in such a stunning pose must be given up, for in keeping the pose we might run on a sand-bank, and be longer still in making that temple of the god of the harvest. It is not necessary to watch the thermometer to know that the mercury is falling rapidly; our friends in the north must be stuffing "dead Cæsar" or anything else into the cracks of doors and windows, for here, thousands of miles to the south, the mercury has fallen from 80° to 48°.

Miss Edwards, in her never-to-be-surpassed guide, speaks of the volcanic appearance of this stretch from Dakkeh to Korosko; we find no explanation in later articles, books, or guides, of this strange formation. No one even hazards a guess.

One hill to which we are coming very rapidly has the exact appearance of an extinct volcano; even the crater is perfectly formed. Baedeker says nothing more than that it is "a dark mountain."

"Maharrakah," the reis tells us.

"What does Maharrakah mean?"

"Not Arabic, think something Barbar," says Alli.

We then ask the cook, who for want of a proper word goes to the kitchen and brings out a piece of over-toasted bread. We see he is trying to give the word "scorched," and in future Sitt will always think of Maharrakah as "an over-toasted mountain."

We are sailing better and better as the day goes on, and shall certainly make a good run, unless we upset, which would seem the inevitable thing to happen to a boat that has neither keel nor centreboard. We do not spread as great a canvas as the Shamrock, to



be sure, but then again we draw but about two feet of water. There are no squalls, and we always sail right before the wind — when there is a wind; and perhaps that has something to do with this question, which will always be a mystery. Yesterday, when becalmed and tracking, it would have been hard to realize the exhilaration of such a run as we have made to-day.

Sitt has been to market with the cook, — the somewhat limited but easily got at market in the storeroom, — and announces that the menu for luncheon is ham and eggs, mashed potatoes, and fried polenta, with real American molasses. For dinner, a beef tongue, macaroni and peas, pancakes, with brown sugar and rum for trimmings. She also declares that after trying for four days to find an exact simile for this golden Libyan desert sand, she finds it in her pantry: it is the exact color of Indian corn. The rocks which shine out between these beds and golden stretches of sand are all the richest shades of purple, not black, as is so often said in travelers' guides, and the distances take on at all times of day the violet tone which can be seen in lower Egypt only

towards sunrise and sunset. But so far as comparison will go, there is yet no point where the hill ranges have the same beauty and character as the famous hill range back of old Thebes.

The Nubian husbandman's daily struggle with this Libyan sand is pathetic; day by day it sweeps down. It cannot at any one time be diked out like the water from the Pays Bas, and the work can never be counted as finished; it is as overwhelming as the struggle with any other one of great Nature's forces.

The shores to the right are covered sometimes to the very water's edge with these drifts of golden sand; such sweeps, such unbroken avalanches, such constant sources of delight to the traveler, who scarcely notices the pathetic little crops continually destroyed and overblown from the limitless supply up yonder.

And here our sailors are yelling and howling — for no other words describe the sounds — and struggling to get the boat around a bend in the river where the wind is dead ahead. They work with a will, for once round this point, there is a straightaway run of ten miles to Korosko.

The day has been unusual, for the sun has been covered with huge wind clouds, in this region where it is generally hard to find a cloud as big as a man's hand. We have been racing all day with those ghiashas which got half an hour's start of us this morning. Our crew are really like live sports today, and instead of murmuring "maleesh" like Orientals, they show all the energy of men of the West in making up the mile or so which still divides the flotilla of boats from our houseboat, which, by the way, is still nameless.

The crew have killed and eaten their lamb; not a vestige of it is left save the fleece, which is tacked to our mainmast.

No matter how hard they track and pole during the day, they have breath and energy for their weird evening songs, and kuz — little brown jug — is as good as any at a solo; though he has worked steadily since dawn, has cooked three meals for eight men, and washed the big bowl over the deck's side after each meal — the bowl which constitutes the dishes for eight.

We have noticed in the last two or three days a great renewal of religious fervor on

the part of the crew. For truth to tell, we were much surprised that they prayed so little; now there are often as many as three of them going through different genuflections at the same time, and yesterday one went so far as to leave the towing-line to drop on his knees. After prostrating himself many times he jumped up, ran after the trackers, and again took his place in line.

We are sailing fast into the sunset, and overhauling those ghiashas, when there comes a dreadful grating sound, and we are run on a sand-bank. Sooner than it can be told, two of the men are over the side carrying the anchor; there they push and pull. Even Alli and our six-foot cook lend a hand, while Howadji swears, which helps the situation so far as he is concerned; but when we are again afloat, the ghiashas have disappeared into the darkness, for the rising moon is obscured by heavy dark clouds, portending in any other country a storm.

There is still enough light to sail by, and an hour later we see lights along the shore, and here are the ghiashas tied up in a row. We have caught up to them at last. Though the wind is still good, the reis cannot be in-

duced to sail farther, and we too are soon tied up at that same bank.

Howadji has had the same experience when going over the Spanish Pyrenees on horseback ; the guides would never push on ahead of the others of the party, and no inducement of tobacco or backsheesh would persuade them. The pack-mules and pack-horses all went on at once and all stopped at once, and apparently, be it the Pyrenees or be it Nubia, man likes to travel in company with others of his kind.

## CHAPTER VII

### MUTINY AT KOROSKO

WE have been watching for the down post-boat, intending to board her in spite of having been warned that, owing to her speed when going with the current, it would be difficult to do so, for our Christmas mail must get on its way as soon as possible. While at dinner the crew sights her, and the felucca is soon manned, with Alli, as coxswain, carrying a lot of letters and Christmas cards, stamped, and tied into neat packages. He feels his importance, and salutes as the felucca pushes off. The post-boat comes surging down, her furnace doors wide open for coaling, and the glare of her fires shining far ahead. Our little boat approaches her with lantern swinging high and men shouting, but she neither whistles nor slackens speed, and noisily keeps on her way. There is such disdain in the way the back paddle-wheel shakes the water off its flanges almost

into our poor little felucca, and such disappointment on the men's faces, and in our hearts, for we had calculated to a nicety upon catching the London mail, and to lose a whole week is more than our equanimity can stand.

The men return, saying it was not the post-boat, but Alli says, —

“Think it bosta;” wisely adding, “when you get Korosko you know.”

This incident rather spoils our appetite for pancakes with brown sugar and rum sauce, and we go early to bed to try to sleep off our disappointment. But from one of the ghiashas tied up near us come loudly intoned prayers.

A big sheik repeats over and over, and at about two minutes' interval, the same words. For a few moments he appears to drop to sleep, but so soon as Sitt is about to follow suit, his invocation again begins. Of what wickedness has he been lately guilty to cause such ever recurring, often repeated wailings and lamentations? At length it becomes unendurable, and thrusting her head out of the cabin window beside her bunk Sitt cries, —

“Assib! Assib!” (Enough! Enough!)

and closes the window with a bang. Then there is silence.

All next day the big sheik, wrapped in his blanket, sits in the bows of his ghiasha, and as his boat follows us, watches our every motion attentively, wondering, we suppose, what kind of dogs of Christians we are.

Here we are at Korosko, within ten minutes of the hour that the captain, two days ago, predicted we should arrive; he might have been running on some set schedule time, for our runs and calms seem somehow to have been known and reckoned on before.

Korosko, where Gordon once had his headquarters, and where Conan Doyle laid the scene of his little tragedy, is a clean, quiet settlement, running along the river bank, as do most of the villages, with a few people loafing here and there. We confide our packages of letters to the accommodating postman, who promises to put them aboard the next down post-boat.<sup>1</sup> One was due last night, he declares, and a boat did indeed go by, but since it did not stop, it could not have been the mail-boat.

<sup>1</sup> Most of these letters, after a voyage of six thousand miles, were delivered in America on Christmas day.



“All same, think bosta, never you mind,” avers Alli in a stage aside.

Though Alli has been the Howadji's faithful servant for years, his master has never been able exactly to understand what Alli means when he says, “Never you mind.” Tell him that the bread is out, and you fear he may have no dinner, he replies, “Never you mind.” Lose your temper and rate him soundly, it is the same, “Never you mind.”

Beyond seeing what is to see, we have in mind the purchase of eggs, chicken food, bread for the servants, and a china bowl or two, and our handsome six-foot cook, with his turban of white cashmere, and carrying a cane, has come ashore with us in the little felucca. But this does not mean that he is carrying any bundles or baskets. No, he always manages to have a fag, be it one of the crew or some boy picked up in a bazaar. Now Alli never seems better pleased than when making himself useful, and between these two there is a race war. Alli, an Arab from Cairo, has our interests at stake, speaks a different language from these Nubians, cannot understand what cabals they are plotting against him, and guards our stores much too



ALI WASHING BREAKFAST DISHES

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jealously to be a favorite. They are banded together to make his life miserable, but it is another instance of "kick me, kick my dog," for they have reckoned without the How-adj, to whom Alli is valuable, and who says of his master, "One word, same word every day."

We find fresh eggs, chicken food, etc., at more than market prices, but allow the traders to *do* us rather than spend a longer time in the heat and crowd of the bazaars. There is nothing of interest to be bought except a pretty little gazelle and a chameleon or two, but we cannot put the nose of our hedgehog out of joint by adopting new pets; so we soon turn our faces toward the point where we had left our houseboat in midstream.

But from the bank we can nowhere see our home. Where can it have stowed itself, thus to be entirely out of sight? We look downstream where the current might have carried it; we look upstream toward points we hoped to reach during the afternoon. At last, with the aid of sailors' eyes, we discover a boat lying in under the bank at least two miles to the south and too far off to distinguish the flags, which the sailors de-

clare to be ours. So we are in for a long pull upstream in the midday sun, whose rays draw forth all the latent fury of our natures ; with mustard plasters all over shoulders and arms we could scarce have been more uncomfortable.

Finally reaching the shelter of home, Howadji proceeds to give the reis much important information upon the state of his mind, which the Nubian can only infer from voice and gesture, for Howadji knows no suitable epithets in the reis's tongue, and "damn" in every tense and number does not make half an impression if one does not understand English. Then he gives orders to go on at once, crew's dinner or no dinner.

But the reis does not obey ; no man goes to his post ; and we soon discover that his sailing away from the village was not an accident but a preconcerted plan, and that we are in for a mutiny, here beyond the hearing of the military authorities of Korosko, for all this country above Assouan is under military jurisdiction.

The reis and crew, through Alli, declare that they will do no more work, will go no farther, until Howadji gives backsheesh.

As Gilbert says in one of his inimitable operettas, "here 's a howdydoo."

If we submit to their demands, the rest of our voyage, will be uncomfortable and the reis will be his own master. So Howadji promptly refuses to give backsheesh; if they work well, he will be liberal; but if they do not, he will at once fetch the authorities from Korosko and have the reis and men properly dealt with, — and as a parting shot before retiring to the cabin, Sitt declares that once back in Assouan she shall see Commander Elgood, and the reis's permit will be taken away.

We close the cabin door, draw down the blinds, try to cool off inwardly and outwardly, after the long hot row in the open boat, and the row with the reis, and wait. . . .

Sounds of angry voices, those of the reis and men, penetrate into our little saloon, and higher and above all Alli's voice in argument with them.

On consulting our maps we find we have done a little over a hundred miles, and have reached the far-famed bend in the river where, as the guide-books say, "the north

wind which prevails in winter frequently retards navigation." Why could we not have had at this point some of those gentle breezes or dead calms which have so thwarted our onward progress for the last few days, instead of the real gale from the north, and added to the gale the tempest on the forward deck?

We can find no consolation in Bædeker, unless it is in the fact that "in this reach travelers have the chance of seeing crocodiles, which frequent the sand-banks and lay their eggs in the clefts of the shore; recently, however, they have been somewhat rare." The latter clause is so true that we are destined never to see others than the stuffed ones placed over the doors of certain of the houses to keep off the evil eye.

The tempest on the forward deck seems to have passed over, and instead comes the chorus from the crew, "Allah, helli! Allah, helli."

They are poling and we are moving, and with a gentle knock Alli enters the cabin door.

"Tayīb — never you mind."

We try to look indifferent, but ask, "How did you do it?"

His explanation, translated into current English, is to the effect that the reis had been so astonished at the account brought back by the sailors of the number of letters mailed that morning that he asked Alli to whom Howadji had sent so many. Alli knew no more than the reis, but, unwilling to acknowledge the fact and wishing to create an impression, replied that they were "to the Sirdar, to Wingate Pacha, to Commander Elgood, to Major Watson, to Crookshank Pacha, to General Lane. I remember," said he, "all the great gentlemen's names in Cairo, and tell reis, and he much afraid. Reis want to know why I no tell him Howadji one pacha; he know he pacha, talk strong like pacha."

He is a faithful dog, this servant of Howadji's, and when Sitt calls him a dog, she means it for the highest commendation: he is not only faithful, but is gifted with unusual intelligence and no end of discretion.



## CHAPTER VIII

### GOLDEN SANDS

WHEN we again come forth from our saloon the crew are working lustily, and all signs of the late tempest are gone. Some of the men are in the water up to their armpits, wading forward to plant our funny little anchor, and then hauling upon it, taking it up but little further than the boat's length for each planting. Their shrieking, chanting, and stamping of feet must have been heard for miles.

Kuz never deserts his kitchen during all the tramping and hauling, pulling and poling, but often lends a helping hand while he waits for just the right moment to turn one of his wonderful batter-cakes. The sailors step around him, in front of him, often right over him, but he keeps up the fire, greases his griddle from the bottle of oil, mixes his dough, and bakes his cakes undisturbed by the movements of the others. For this forward deck of the dahabéah is like a back

yard of a cottage: almost as if a second family lived on one's back porch. Either the men are working all over its extent, or they sit about eating and smoking, or they lie fast asleep at full length on its planks, and our cook has continually to walk over them to ply between his kitchen and our pantry. Here the wood is piled and the big chicken coops, with their lively inhabitants, which drink all the water given them ever so many times each day.

Miss Edwards mentions that while her *dahabéah* was being got up this terrible little stretch from Korosko to Derr, she and the others of the party went ashore to pick flowers, but we cannot leave our houseboat if we would, for the *felucca*, usually a clean little row-boat, is half filled with mud.

Sitt finds that the noise and confusion remind her of what her old darkey mammy, when she disapproved of what was going on in the nursery, used to qualify as "scenery." The mammy would often return in the midst of such disorder that she raised her hands, murmuring, "Such scenery! such scenery!"

Our minds are improving daily, but Sitt cannot help feeling that she is getting much

experience which she hopes may never have to be used again.

Some thirty chickens sailed with us from Shellal ; they could not be called stowaways, for they were in their coops forever in sight. The first two which were dished up proved such failures that the temptation was to open the coop doors and allow the others to fly away. But the third attempt was a "stewed chicken," which proved a great success with Huntley & Palmer's Breakfast Biscuits to serve as crust. No chicken-pie could have been better ; here was a trouvaille indeed, for we had all the chickens needful and ever so many boxes of biscuits, and such appetites after all day in the open air !

We are moving along at a scarcely perceptible snail's pace ; a tortoise could make better time than our poor boat, tugged by six men on a tow-line. There are points and ledges of rocks sticking out into the river, and we often think of those two men we left behind us, whose places must be sometimes supplied by even our house servants to sheer us off.

A picturesque old fellow, who looks like the pictures of some of the old prophets of

Bible days, follows us along the bank for some time before we know that he has fresh eggs to sell. He is clad in creamy white, and at length from the folds of his robe brings out a bag of eggs. It reminds us — we don't know why — of the bag from which the hero David brought forth the smooth stone with which he was to slay the giant Goliath. The old man sells us a dozen eggs for two piastres, and then follows us for backsheesh. We wonder where the backsheesh *pourboire* idea first started, for it seems to be deeply rooted in the minds of certain countrymen while quite unknown to others. The old man is quite philosophic over our refusal to pay him more than we bargained for, and has no sooner gone on his way than a youth runs after us carrying a white hen, evidently the layer of all those fresh eggs; but we have chickens galore, who threaten to eat us out of house and home before we can eat them. Next in the procession comes an old hag, who scolds us because our trackers have walked over some of her bean plants. She pipes at us in a high treble voice, panting with the exertion of getting over ground even at our snail's

pace. We feel responsible, and lest she should lose one pod of beans from our having passed that way, roll up a small coin and throw it to her on the bank. The poor old thing is so blind that she cannot even find the white-wrapped coin, so one of our sailors runs back to find it for her. She thanks him in her odd jargon, but when, on opening the package, she sees a nickel instead of the small bronze tenth-of-a-cent coin she expected, she calls after us several times, "God give you happiness."

The north wind is so steady that it is cold even in the sun, the banks look chilly, and the loneliness is extreme; the thermometer in the early morning is down to 40°, and the courage required for one's early tubbing is as great as in a New England snowstorm.

A line of little children squat along the highest ridge of the bank, some thirty feet above the water line; one of them ventures too near the bank's edge, and has all she can do to scramble back; down through the break which she made in the crust the golden sand begins to pour; it runs, runs, runs down the side like a little mountain waterfall, and is still running when we pass out of sight.

The poet of the dear old hymn must have been inspired in Nubia to have written, —

“Where Afric’s sunny fountains  
Roll down their golden sand.”

Here is a chance to make many golden guineas each season; they are sure to come to the man who manufactures small hour-glasses of this golden sand, which the hundreds of excursionists who annually pass along would take to their homes in every quarter of the globe. The idea is not patented, and for our quota of profit we shall accept samples sent care of Alli Hassan.

All day the lovely little temple of Amada has been in view; and late in the afternoon we follow the jackal tracks through the sand — for he seems to know the way — and come to the confines of this little ruin. After an hour’s walk, in which we see no living human being, not even a beggar, we reach a deserted saqquia and dead palm-tree. Some one has tried, has struggled, to bring this spot under cultivation, but the sand is too obdurate, too relentless and implacable, to admit a conqueror’s heel, and has won the hard-fought fight.

On the temple walls there is still some

color to be seen, and the sand-drifts admit of our stepping up on the roof. Here among the various names cut in the rock are those of Arabs and Greeks, and, most "up to date," those of some of the Seventy-ninth Highlanders, cut but a few months ago, a record of the last conquerors of this land. High up in the rock is cut the name of Herodotus, and under it "a lie." Whether it is or not, no one now shall ever know; it is very easy to give the lie, however, and some one may perhaps come along some day and cut "a lie" under the names of the Seventy-ninth Scotchmen; and which of us will be here to vouch for the truth of the cutting?

Several pages descriptive of this temple can be quoted from Baedeker, but they describe many things now reburied beneath the sand, and the Egyptian Society keeps no guardian to demand tickets at the gate, for even the gates are all covered. Shepherds and their flocks have sought shelter here, and lighted fires, and then passed on their way. Camels' feet and goats' feet have left their impression, but where are they all now? No human, no animal, no sound; the quaint little ruin is left deserted. Now that the

Khalifa is no more, perhaps the waste lands in Nubia may some day again be inhabited.

There is one little track which we follow for many yards, — that of a little animal with one weak leg and a long tail, which proves to be a kangaroo mouse. We find him in the midst of a little circle round which he turned in his death agony. Something had bitten that left hind leg, and he had died of his wound. Shaped like a miniature kangaroo, he has two very long hind legs, two very short front ones, a soft gray fur, and long, pointed head; he has a long tail, feathered at the end. Though in the coming weeks we often see the tracks of these beautiful little animals, we never see one alive.

The short winter afternoon is at an end, and we fairly slide down the golden sand to our boat, glad to find dinner ready, and our Rochester lamp shedding its light and its grateful heat in the saloon, — for which America be thanked.



## CHAPTER IX

### A CARAVAN

QUIET reigns this cool evening, for the crew, tired out with tracking, calling, and beating of feet, have stretched themselves in the shallow hold under the forward deck. Before 7 P. M. they are so fast asleep that they cannot be even dreaming of all the hours of work they have done to-day. Instead of sitting about and playing on the tom-tom, almost too sleepy to eat their dinners, all, from Reis Mohammed to little kuz of twelve years, have curled up in the various scant coverings, from which not even an ear or an eye protrudes. We are ourselves tired out with even the sight of so much struggling and scuffling, and the hedgehog is the only living thing aboard whose energy bids fair to continue into the night. As the sun sinks each evening he seems to waken gradually, and scratches all night in the box, from which we do not dare to let him out,

lest the morning find him many miles on his way to Assouan.

We have at last decided upon a name for our home. We call it the "Terrapin," from its love of getting on sand-banks and its amphibious character. Sitt tries to explain the name to Alli, who says "Scarab," and scrutinizes the hasty sketch of a real diamond back, finally saying, "They have them at Alexandria, but not up here." But we still hold to the name, for none other can be so appropriate, and had there been a sign-painter within reach, we would by this time certainly have called upon him to paint "Terrapin" on our bows.

Now that the few weary miles to Derr are accomplished and the fight with the north wind is over, we remember that we are here just at the time Reis Mohammed predicted. The three days' struggle is ended, and the canny old Oriental looks as if he never had hurried and never would hurry.

These Nubians are far from lazy; they are excellent workers, but, like all black labor, require the brain of a white man to superintend, direct, and supervise. Ofttimes a gang of workmen who refuse to be led by one of

their own color work well under a low type of Greek or Arab.

Joy comes with the morning. The crew have slept a long sleep, have quite forgotten the galley-slave labor of the last three days, and sit around one of the men, who seems, to judge from the roars of laughter from his audience, to be telling a funny story. A few moments later they are all singing choruses to the energetic beating of their drums, — such energetic beating and such energetic singing!

Beyond Derr the effect of wide-spreading palms and castor-oil bushes suggests the tropics. Dozens of saquias line the banks, and the region would be described as one of the most fertile tracts on the Upper Nile. The droning of these many water-wheels reminds Howadji of the choruses at the suppers of the "Latin Quarter Club" in his student days, for the saquias, like the students, almost succeed in singing in tune. May the north wind which has battled with us for days now befriend us, for to tie up near this array of ungreased machinery would be more than nerves can stand, aside from the fact that Christmas is coming, and we cannot put

back the calendar, even if it has taken us three days to go twelve miles.

We had other plans for Christmas, but we are still within sight of Derr, with never a whiff to carry us on. There is not a ripple on the face of old Nile, and the thermometer, which registered but  $42^{\circ}$  this morning, is now up to  $90^{\circ}$ . The ghiashas which have been our companions for several days lie against the bank, their big sails hanging as limp as so many half-filled balloons. We hear some murmurings of life far away on the bank — the bark of a dog, the voices of some children at play, but never the crying of a child. Sitt would like so much to know how these Nubian mothers prevent this almost hourly occurrence in civilized nurseries, for Howadji has noted that he has never seen an Egyptian mother kiss her child, and that all parental affection seems to be exhausted in chastising them. Everything in Nubia is different, — even Alli witnesses to surprising things. “Donkeys no shoes here, like people,” he avers.

There is a surprising sentence in Baedeker's worth quoting, viz.: “Crocodiles now become more numerous, looking from a dis-

tance like tree-trunks or like huge frogs." Had we come to see crocodiles, we should indeed be disappointed, for in spite of Bae-deker, there is no trace of these old river gods.

As the calm threatens to continue the rest of the winter, we leave home to see a Roman ruin, with arches and towers of sun-dried brick and finely quarried foundations of red sandstone. There are many broken mortars for grinding corn, and stone troughs for bread-making, within the many chambers of this Roman castle. They are too broken and bulky to warrant carrying them away, especially since the sailors are far more interested in some recent jackal tracks, and are with sticks searching under each stone and around each arch.

A caravan of a dozen camels under the charge of several men mounted on donkeys passes slowly along ; a guard marches ahead on foot armed with a yard-long dervish sword, while behind comes a mounted guard armed with a gun, in the muzzle of which is stuck a colored rag. They pass close to us, but never look to the right or left, do not even pass the time of day or give us a blessing,

which is more to the point than the time of day in a country where time is reckoned in dynasties. It is such a picturesque procession that the temptation is to hold them up long enough to make a sketch, for with them and with our crew armed with sticks and staves, the picture would indeed have Oriental flavor. These are the things that will pass away forever with the Cape to Cairo Railroad ; no camels, no guards, no dervishes, but iron monsters driving ahead. Time will be gained, but how many other things lost !

The Roman ruin we had been exploring has its twin sister on the opposite bank of the river. Perhaps both were one day joined by a great chain of forged links, guarded by sentries armed with spears and lances, and having the determination of Roman conquerors. The Roman castle, with its ruined and crumbling arches and square tower, if overgrown with the loving and clinging English ivy, would look like the remains of a Gothic chapel, but without that tracery it resembles a factory which had perhaps burned before the fire department of the district could get to the scene. There is no mention in the guide-books of these points. Even the history

is forgotten ; in eighteen hundred years there are some facts which escape the notice of the best informed historian.

We think of many things we would like to have explored when we are again on our houseboat.

The reis profits by the calm to give us a lecture on the subject of a ghiasha which has gone on a sand-bank near by, where it will remain until the next year's high Nile. The poor ghiasha will serve until then as a light-house, or bell buoy, to warn others from a like fate. The reis continues his moral tale with the history of a dahabéah, which near here ran upon a hidden bank, and could not be floated until all the household furniture and stores had been carried, load by load, to shore, the heavy rigging got away, and the craft stripped of all her beauty and elegance, when she was dragged off by the help of a stern-wheeler.

He has also heard from an upcoming boat that the river is so low at Assouan that the excursion boats are already sticking in the mud ; if such be the history of the early part of December, what will be the report in January and February ? We don't know what

he is hinting at, nor do we see the moral of his tales, unless it be that everything that he can tell us of an unfortunate nature which has happened to his fellow reises must naturally redound to his own glorification, and make us judge leniently of him when he in his turn goes on another bank. In case we make shipwreck, there is a path all along the Nile banks, but it would be weary indeed to walk, or even ride, in the deep sand and hot sun.

The air is so dry that we no longer wonder at the natives, whose hair is all smoothed down and saturated with castor oil. Our lips are as chapped as in a January snowstorm. As to combing one's hair, it is impossible. The more one combs and brushes, the greater the apparent disorder. The heads of the little natives fairly glisten with castor oil. One of them, who fell head foremost into a sand-drift, came up golden-haired.

We have made a little headway, but discover that all but two of the crew have gone fishing, in fact we can, with the aid of a glass, see them about a mile ahead. They are ordered back by the reis, who has not much of a voice, but in this stillness can readily



make himself heard. They expected us to catch up with them, but the Terrapin has instead calmly awaited their return, tied to the bank for fear we might float downstream with the current.

We awake next morning to find ourselves still under a gold and green bank, near a long line of saquias, which are fortunately out of use, and look in every direction for any sign of wind, — not a ripple save those made by the water fretting over some very shallow points in the river-bed. The men track for several hours, until we see the bold outline of Kasrn Ibrīm far ahead in the distance. We have for several days been interesting ourselves in this ruined fortress, and long for a wind to carry us on. We whistle, we stick needles into the mast, and do everything that legend says is sure to bring the winds of heaven, but are to all appearances to have a lesson in patience. Sitt has some Renaissance lace-work to occupy her spare moments, and the needle fairly flies in and out with her suppressed impatience at thus dragging along day after day.

We track on and on until at midday comes a gentle breeze, so gentle that the Terrapin

goes on a sand-bank and stays there, just as terrapins love to do, basking in the midday sun, while the bold, rocky headland of Kasrn Ibrīm seems just as far away as at six that morning. How is it that the watched pot never boils, and all comes to those who wait? Ibrīm had been waiting there too, these many centuries, and is still there when we sail gently up to its base at sunset.

Wonderful rock! Between two and three hundred feet out of the water it rises, quite the most stunning natural formation we have seen since leaving the valley of the tombs of the kings, Biban-el-Muluk.

We are leaving the scaling of this rock until our down voyage, and continue on our way as the sun sets. The rocky headland is turned to brilliant copper in the glory of the afterglow; each irregularity in the rock's face, each overhanging ruin of wall or fortress catches the light; everything, from the turrets at the top to the débris at the foot of the crumbling walls, is touched into vivid colors.

Its history, as found in our guide-books, is very disconnected; centuries intervene between different recorded events. That the

Romans were here as long ago as before the Christian era is undisputed, but how many other peoples have before, and since, profited by its natural fortress of rock to dominate over the surrounding fields and fast flowing river?

Reis Mohammed, very unwillingly, runs the boat ashore on a little beach to the south of the headland, whence we clamber into several interesting rock chambers, or tombs, cut in the face of the hill twenty and more feet above high-water mark. These are as usual decorated with figures of Rameses, Horus, Hathor, and others of our intimate friends among gods and kings. The values between the different points of interest are so well kept and clearly given in Miss Edwards's guide that we cannot understand her omission of Kasrn Ibrīm from her list of Nubian wonders. Perhaps she did not see it from its more beautiful side, or perhaps she was sleeping or dining when passing it. She fails to note either its wondrous natural position or any point in its history.

To us the Kasrn Ibrīm, which is likely to have been a fortress even before history

began, would be just the setting for a historical novel.

The moon lights us on our way, and in spite of all the reis's histories and moral tales of dahabéahs and ghiashas which ran upon sand-banks because of their too great desire to push on, we continue on our way for a couple of hours, feeling that this Saturday night sees "something begun, something accomplished."

## CHAPTER X

### OUR LAST LOAF OF BREAD

SUNDAY morning opens as quietly as all other mornings, and you have no idea how much that means.

There are no hucksters crying out early morning necessities, there are no market carts hurrying by to market, there are no huntsmen's horns to proclaim "that a southerly wind and a cloudy sky" makes it a fine hunting morning, there is no reveillé to call up the troop in a garrison near by, there are no children to be sent off to school, no bells to call the heavy-eyed dwellers in a Carmelite nunnery to go on their knees, no milk-carts hurrying by with clattering milk-cans. No, not one of the noises which can generally be heard in various corners of the earth can be heard here. An alarm clock would be ashamed if it heard itself. In two weeks there has scarcely been the call of a bird, the twitter of a locust, and but once have we

heard a tree-toad. We have seen no snake, no scorpion, in this region where we were told they abounded. The botany, the ornithology, and geology of this land of Nubia could apparently be read through before breakfast, though we should like to hear a geologist's running commentary upon the strange volcanic and tumulus appearance of the hills we pass from time to time.

With Sunday has come a good breeze, mile after mile slips easily away, and we almost upset the old reis and the houseboat too in our sudden determination to stop for a few moments for a closer inspection of a strange old dahabéah flying a Turkish flag, and for a pennant a blue flag with a square white figure in the centre of the blue field.

It looks in the distance like a "blue-peter," but is in reality a government salt-boat; and the guard with his gun on his shoulder comes to meet us, — to see, we suppose, whether we land any salt, — and is surprised to find that we are strangers. He, like every one else along the stretch of the river, knows our boat, which last year was taken by some engineers, who came up to determine which villages would be under water when the great new barrage is finished.

He doubtless wonders what interest we can have in examining at close quarters the unloading of the little packages of salt, for salt, being a commodity heavily taxed by the government, can only be sold by special permission and under government inspection. Men, women, and children come up and down the bank like so many ants, carrying away the small blue packages to deposit at their houses.

It is impossible for us to understand the transaction exactly, — whether the villagers are allowed so much, whether a purchase is made by each family, or whether each man buys according to his needs. We see no money exchanged, and the guard keeps a sharper lookout on us than he does on the natives, seeming to suspect us of something, we do not quite know what.

This is one of the occasions when Alli cannot tell us the details of the transaction, when his “should” is “would,” and his “d’s” and “t’s” are mixed past hope of deciphering. He insists upon calling “salt” “sugar,” so our ignorance must be laid at his door.

There are so many things about these Nubians which are hard to understand. For

instance, they do not like beans, while the Arabs in Cairo are continually eating them. Every day or two our Nubian cook takes the bit in his teeth and disdains beans, Howadji's bread, Italian polenta, and other things which we find very palatable. When Sitt gives out beans from the storeroom, she almost has to sit up with those beans to see that no accident happens to them. Something unforeseen always occurs: either they are accidentally thrown away, or they are not soaked, or else they are burnt, or so much salted as to be uneatable. To-day there is a new accident: the cook falls down the hatchway with the basin of beans, and then comes to Sitt to ask her to scold the sailors for leaving the hatchway open. This she refuses to do, and feels like telling him that he has eyes as well as the beans; on the contrary, she sends him down into the hold to collect the basin and the beans. Now the hold is but three feet deep, the beans and cook can be collected, but the basin has received injury which may incapacitate it for further use; but it will at any rate serve for a modern testimonial of the fall of man.

There are plenty of stores in the store-



room, but we are on our last loaf of bread. The cook has proved beyond doubt several times that he cannot make bread, so we shall have no more until we board that up-coming post-boat. According to our calculations, that boat with bread and mail is due to-night. At Toshkeh they told us it would probably steam up between eight o'clock and midnight, and as we are generally asleep long before nine o'clock, we shall have to do sentry duty or sleep with one eye open, lest bread and mail be carried on, for it is not the post-boat which undertakes to find us ; it is left to us to sight and board her.

Sitt cannot decide whether she is most anxious to see the package of fresh bread or the package of letters. If the steamer comes along before dark, we may have the chance of looking upon the face of a white man ; how pale he will look after these weeks among the black faces of Nubia ! We are almost at the point that the bride reached, of which Mr. Punch told, who, when asked by her newly made husband if she would like to see a friend, replied, " Yes ; a friend, or even an enemy." We have reached almost the enemy stage.

There is much to interest us all the afternoon, for the wind is good, and we are making a real run, though the banks are somewhat uninteresting in view of what is in store for us in the early morning, the Mecca to which we have steered for many days. The wind stiffens, and we have all we want and can stand, but not to the point of reefing either sail.

These Nile houseboats are of queer construction, with one sail in the extreme bow and the other at the stern; perhaps Sitt can even designate the latter as a spanker. The harder the wind blows, the deeper we bury our bows, and we only sail when the wind is astern; the system of navigation is still a mystery, and though Sitt often gives orders about the sailing and stopping, the reis manages to obey them without capsizing or wrecking the boat. Instead of the boat's being lightened, it is loaded down with many unnecessary things; coils of rope, chicken coops, bags of grain, firewood, and coal, and all the kitchen utensils are immediately upon the bows. When the men are at leisure, there they often cluster. When we have a good breeze and the Terrapin ducks her

head, it is a constant wonder that she does n't kick up her heels and plunge head-foremost into the river. Perhaps it is because she could not get a real plunge, for this yellow brown stream, with its eddies and whirling currents, which looks so strong and mighty for evil, is oftentimes but a few feet deep, and even in the middle is sometimes no feet at all. Yet it is not well to be too trusting, for at Luxor, where the river looks even and quiet, the whirlpools are so great that have not a carriage and horses been known to be engulfed and disappear in a few moments? Those who know the Nile well dread to see it at flood tide. Many poor animals are swept away by the caving in of the banks, worn and torn by the rushing waters, with even some attendant loss of human life. Our boat, however, seems to have no fear of this now placid stream, and plunges on her way when the wind is fine as majestically as she sticks on a sand-bank when we are becalmed.

When the sun goes down, Reis Mohammed insists upon sailing up to Abou Simbel and anchoring there after dark. Persuasions, entreaties, and explanations fail to make the

old fellow understand that after having come many hundreds, even thousands of miles, to see this wonderful temple, we cannot allow him to go on and tie up at its base when there is no glory of sunlight enveloping and surrounding it. The moon is bright and the wind is strong, to be sure, and the old man protests that we should profit by both. He little knows what determined Anglo-Saxons he has to deal with. He is inflexible until Howadji goes upon deck and talks like a pacha, with threats and strong language. Then he reluctantly lets the boat fall off, and come to an anchorage at a suitable place about two miles north of the temple, from which we can watch for the coming of the bread and the mail, and send the felucca to gather in our supplies from the fast-going government boat.

Reis Mohammed points to a line of cliffs which can be easily discerned in the moonlight, and again begs to be allowed to proceed. But we are obdurate. Sitt supposes that the old fellow realizes that the wind may blow itself out before morning, and that the two miles may have to be tracked. He cannot understand our feelings; it is

incomprehensible to him that having been so anxious to get on as fast as possible, even to sail at night rather than lose time, we should now want to stop and let the spanking breeze go on without us. We are not to be deprived by him of our long-looked-for, much-talked-of approach to the rock wonder, with the spectacle of the rising sun gilding first one point, then another.

We tie up to-night in the Soudan, for some time after dark we slip by the signboard which we are told by the reis bears the word "Soudan." He promised to show it to us, but the excitement of the spanking breeze has caused him to forget, and we pass this boundary between Nubia and the Soudan just as we passed, some days since, the Tropic of Cancer.

## CHAPTER XI

### ABOU SIMBEL

THE mail-boat, with all its pounds of steam pressure, with all the revolutions of its stern wheel, and all its puffing and blowing, is not so well up to her schedule time as our houseboat, which depends solely upon the wind, which blows or blows not, as it likes, from the Libyan desert. We expected to see the steamer at sunset, felt confident we should sight her by eight in the evening, would have sworn she could not be so late as midnight; but not until four in the morning do we hear the pulsing of her engines, and only then by putting our heads on our pillows, which serve in some way to bring us in direct communication with the water, the planks of the boat, and so on; when we open the cabin windows and stick forth our heads into the cold night, all sound is lost. We do so long for those letters, we so need that bread, that when, at the end of

an hour, the throbs are still no clearer, we feel that we may have imagined them; that our wishes, perhaps, have been father to these sounds. Yet no sooner do we try to settle to sleep, and Sitt's ear is again on the pillow, than she distinctly hears that machinery throbbing in the silent night.

How many times Howadji opens and shuts his windows, how many times he goes upon deck, and how many times he is about to rouse the sleeping crew, we do not count. Thus pass the hours from 3 to 5 A. M., and by sunrise Sitt feels as if it must be some time in the afternoon. All hours at the best get mixed on a Nile journey, and our experience is the exact reverse of that of the shark, who "frequently breakfasts at five o'clock tea and dines on the following day," for we often eat our breakfast so early that by nine or ten we are ready for luncheon, and in the evening are sleepy before Americans of the last generation would have begun to think about dinner.

At length bread, letters, and Abou Simbel come all at once. Which can best wait? Not bread, for we, who have virtually been up all night, are ready for our breakfast; not

the sunrise tints on the wondrous temple, for there are no Joshuas ready to command the sun to go back ; not our first telegrams and home letters. A fitting of all in at the same time is arranged by having breakfast served on deck, sorting and reading letters between bites, and between watching the sun as it gilds one hill, then another.

There being no wind, it will take two hours' tracking to do what fifteen minutes of yesterday's wind could have done for us. On this morning, however, we do not complain, for while the men track we breakfast, read the more important of our letters, and are ready by the time we are near enough to salute Rameses in all his glory, and give him our undivided attention.

The Howadji had caught sight of a white face as the mail-boat steamed by, and would have very much liked to inquire from its owner the day of the week and the hour of the day. We feel sure it is Monday, but the crew are just as sure that it is Tuesday. It is much more upsetting than Sitt ever would have supposed not to know the day of the week. As to the hour of the day, either the Tropic of Cancer or the Southern Cross



must have tampered with our watches, for there is over three quarters of an hour's difference between them. They are both Waltham watches, but we do not know which one to be ashamed of, nor which to be proud of. Though no great astronomical calculations are dependent upon our knowing the exact hour of sunset, or the exact hour of its rising again, it is still a comfort to our humble selves to know these little details of our everyday life.

There is not a breath of wind, and as we approach what should be the eighth wonder of the world, it is difficult to distinguish the reality from the reflections. What do we really see? Since no one has ever been able to give us an intelligent description, so in turn Sitt decides that all should come to see for themselves; for color and form are both difficult to express with pen and paper.

First must be taken into consideration the bend and sweep of the river, the hills, and sand, which, by reason of the river's bend, we see in combination; then the colors of each of these separately, then combined; and furthermore the reflections of all:—the color of the sky, the color of the water, the color of

the rocks, the violet tones in the mud-banks, the avalanches of sand like gigantic piles of Indian corn escaping and bursting from a granary, yellow, so yellow ; the pink and purple rocks show up between the great sand-drifts, and the outlines of the golden headlands reach to the water's edge ; — then imagine all this golden beauty reflected, doubled, in the river.

Well it is that Nubia signifies “golden.”

When we have begun to digest some of this, we leave our houseboat and make the crossing of the river in our felucca. As we proceed yard by yard, the details of the temple grow in clearness and beauty. At last we land at the very feet of the king.

The hand of time has touched the façade of the temple sufficiently to add to its beauty rather than detract from it. Instead of four colossal seated figures, as the children would say, “pin for pin alike,” with four heads wearing crowns, eight legs, and ever so many fingers and toes in exact rows, the end of the nineteenth century sees one figure broken away down to the waist, three out of the four crowns gone, one set of legs crumbled away ; a most picturesque ensemble.

The proportions, the architecture, and the sculpture are what at first hold one spell-bound; later the beauty of the faces, the generosity of the great six-foot-wide mouths, kind, calm, benign. The crown lies broken at the feet of the figure which is itself broken away. Why is it that the three remaining figures are more beautiful than four could ever have been? Why is the number three as subtly beautiful in architecture as it is fraught with grace in music?

It is difficult to find just the best point whence these giants can be rightly studied. Across the river one is too far off; at the temple's side one is too near; up the hill slope one is too much on top of them, and at their feet one is too much under them. They are so strangely human, so the reverse of stone or stony, these great figures of the great King Rameses II., that we search for the resemblance between them and the pathetic mummy of his majesty in the Ghizeh Museum. These represent him in his youth, when he was the cynosure of all eyes, the carver of men's destinies as well as the greatest builder-king that the world has ever seen, and could scarcely be expected to look in



THE TERRAPIN AT ABOU SIMBEL

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any way like the attenuated, thin, and aged mummy of ninety odd summers. In the figures can be seen the roundness of youth and a flexible mouth, while the mummy, even crumbling and blackened as it is, has the set mouth and jaw of one whose word has been more than law.

The silence, the dignity, and the solemnity of any things dating back to many centuries before the Holy Babe was laid in a manger send us away speechless, to return to our home overwhelmed, glad for a while to leave the strange, weird grandeur of the temple façade, and to turn to the everyday affairs of life.

Nor have we time this morning to begin the study of either interior or exterior, for many details of home comfort await our personal attention. Our moorage is to be chosen, not too near the temple, not where there is any chance of back water or special *courant d'air* coming down between the hills; it must be at some spot where the chickens can be put ashore, the lines for the washing can be strung, and the crew can have a kitchen in the cleft of some rock. There is also the remainder of the mail to be sorted; the

week's bread to put away where it will keep moist; many things are to be done which we only can arrange. How far off concerts in London and Paris seem, and how meaningless the rise and fall of New York stocks, as we read of them in the three weeks' old newspapers; and how many engagements there must have been in South Africa! Ladysmith and Bloemfontein have been on the lips of all, while we have been sailing back, back, back, into times older than Moses and Aaron.

We find that our boat has already been poled across to a very fair little cove, and that the sailors are preëmpting a certain piece of the bank. The boundaries of our domain are being marked with stones and pieces of rock, while the chicken coops are opened to give our traveled fowls a chance to scratch round a bit. Some of the crew are already arranging stones for their kitchen, and putting their garments to soak in the river.

These blacks have worked so hard, have trudged so many weary miles along the banks, tracking, poling, and wading in the shallows, that there has been little time for

washing their clothes, for shaving and hair-cutting, and they look a sorry lot indeed. The discovery has been made that the guardian of the temple is a "tonorial artist," used to shaving the different boats' crews on their up and down voyages. The price he asks is one millium (the tenth of a cent), but we are not sure whether our crew do not try to make a special bargain for the job lot. The artist has taken the "little temple" entrance for the scene of his morning's work; man after man squats before him to be shorn of curly locks and bristling beard. Since there are no morning papers to occupy those who wait their turn in this barber shop, they interview the watchman, and pass on to him all the latest news from down the river.

The silence is unexpectedly broken this afternoon by the shrill whistle which echoes from headland to headland along the shore, and shortly a little paddle-wheel steamer draws up to the bank with its party of excursionists on their way back from Khartoum. In their itinerary is included "ten minutes to visit the Temple of Abou Simbel."

"Ladies and gentlemen, do not forget to



remember to bring your monument tickets," calls the guide as the sloping bank becomes fairly alive with Europeans as well as natives; for along with the excursionists are some Greek traders and Italian settlers from Khartoum; and all come from the boat much as ants issue from an ant-hill on which a traveler puts his foot.

Alli, who shows strange sagacity where least expected, calls the sailors to drive our chickens into their coops, and stations himself near our gangplank; even Alli knows the reputation of those who frequent towns which can only be said to border on civilization.

The newcomers scramble up hill and down, chatter, and make themselves generally at home in and about the temple, which seems to have no special effect upon them. The poor old temple guardian is in despair, for one and all flock in without their one pound monument tickets, and the guide can scarcely begin his ten minutes' explanatory talk, for they are moving about, these Greeks and Italians, like so many small animals. The few excursionists who hold a half loaf to be better than no bread are

endeavoring to see one or two of the most noted wall decorations, realizing the futility of trying in the allotted time to get an idea of even one point of this great temple's beauty. One of the party, a Frenchman, on his way down from Khartoum, declares the whole trip to be a "sell," and he pronounces the governor's palace at Khartoum a very plain construction (he seems to have expected to find something as beautiful as the Tuileries), — nothing at all.

"C'est tout en l'air," he avers. Perhaps he had seen a map of all the new allotment of lands, and feels, as many of us have felt after going into a land scheme which appeared so vast and so finished when viewed on a plot, and so vague when seen on the spot. This Parisian is as full of surprise as a young American mother who once made the Nubian trip with her baby, and was astonished to find herself in a land where she could n't renew the baby's shoes, where there were no shops and no need for shops, and where, as Alli says, "Donkeys like people, no shoes."

Fortunately for us, the crowd soon steams away; many of the party having failed

altogether to take in the grandeur of this rock wonder. We who are moored almost at its foot, seeing it at sunrise, at midday, in all the glory of the setting sun, then in the mystery of twilight, then lighted by the tremendous brilliancy of this moon of the far south, have decided that but for its having been too far away for the world's experts to see easily, there would have been eight instead of seven wonders of the world. We who stay so long and adore so profoundly can appreciate a little the feeling of the Egyptologist who heard a party of excursionists brag that they had finished Karnak in one hour.

“And have you seen it all?”

“Yes, and are just going to see Luxor.”

“How fortunate you are, for I have been studying for many years and have not finished one wall!”

But the sarcasm was lost on the gay excursionists, who continued on their way, to take in, anaconda-like, other temples in the course of the afternoon.

The Upper Egypt silence is often broken by trivial and quaint remarks which linger long after in one's memory, where one would

wish more important things could indelibly engrave themselves ; remarks such as a traveler was heard to make, that she would have enjoyed Egypt very much but for "so many dug-up things."

## CHAPTER XII

### LOST IN THE DESERT

THE Howadji is out by sunrise to study the work of that giant of architects and sculptors, whoever he was, and declares that he has scarcely time to draw a long breath until 11 A. M. During these forenoon hours the mercury often rises some forty and more degrees. But this is unheeded by him to-day in the excitement of noting the difference that each hour of added sunlight makes in his great models. By 10 A. M. the heat has become so great that Sitt sends a sailor to tell Howadji to put up his paints; since he does not heed, she sends another sailor at twenty minutes past ten, and since he still works on, then she goes herself to remind him of the sun's rays. From 11 A. M. he sits in a darkened cabin, to save eyes and brain for the afternoon task which he sets himself. The afternoon's work, however, is knocked off early in order that he may climb

with Sitt to the top of the yellow avalanche to the immediate north of the temple: the avalanche which lovingly throws nature's arm around the rock figures, trying to draw them again into her own being, to cover them, to surround them, and to preserve them for another thousand years. Like the ice maiden's embrace, her enveloping arms are, from the tourist's point of view, to be dreaded.

Her mantle not only swings around and across their giant knees, but with a sweep seeks even to reach the heart, the inner being of the great temple.

With this avalanche the perpetual war of the Excavation Society is waged. A wall has been built on the top of the ridge to ward off its enveloping and overpowering inroads, but while the society sleep it is ever at work; while they collect new funds, it is obliterating the results of their recent efforts.

It is no little exertion to climb this yellow slope, for each foot sinks deep in the soft particles. Several times it seems as if we slip back rather than move forward. With perseverance, at length the level of the knees of the sitting giants is reached; then breathless, panting, the level of their shoulders;

now we are high enough to look down on their heads ; now up, up, up, to the proximity of the frieze of monkeys, whence the top of the hill seems visible. To try to stand still is to slip back, to plunge forward with back bowed, almost on hands and knees, is to gain still a higher outlook. Each point shows one still higher to be investigated, until finally it is a scramble among large and small pieces of what looks like pink and purple lava to the real plateau, whence we can see over a distance of many miles, but everywhere and in every direction the same broken stones, lit up by the resplendent rays of the fast sinking sun. We know this is not lava, but only a flint noddle from which the lime has been disintegrated by the heat of many centuries of sun, broken into small pieces of black, dark red, purple, or pink scales, like a great, never-ending marble-yard of colored marbles, where hundreds of workmen have cut and graded millions of blocks.

And this is the great Libyan desert. For miles there is not so much as a green sprig. Sitt has often pictured to herself a desert as a flat, colorless plain, while this is in reality full of color, rising and falling into many

hills and dales, golden in the sun, and sparkling where there is a deposit of the little atoms of sand which have been rolled and winnowed by the wind until every particle of dust is gone. We have no microscope in our pockets, but take enough sand home in our shoes to serve for exhaustive examination that evening. Some of those atoms are like minute red beads, others like bits of amethyst; then again is a tiny object which must be a cornelian.

Up upon this plateau we find far less sand than one would suppose; it is in many places as clean as a newly swept barn floor, with the chaff and the grain separated into distinct mounds. Are we assisting at the creation of the world up here in this limitless waste, or is it the end of the world? Has everything been destroyed by fire, and we alone left to tell the tale? Was such loneliness ever possible to comprehend until we had seen it for ourselves?

The wind has risen, and the river far below looks like nothing but a dark ribbon; the sand around us is blowing all in one direction, is rolling over and over to join those avalanches which have already begun their



headlong descent to the river. Sometimes it is caught in the cleft of the rock, and piles up much as snow piles itself in a great winter blizzard; at one point it is many feet deep, and a yard away it is hard to collect a handful.

We pass on to investigate a great pile of stones, a kind of cairn which marks the highest point, whence we have a still farther outlook over this limitless face of nature. We are battling with the wind, and when we turn to retrace our steps, we find that our footprints have been entirely obliterated; that from this inland point we have now quite lost sight of the river; that the natural formation is the same whichever way we turn; that we have no exact idea in which direction our little Terrapin lies. The twilights are short in December, and the moon past its full could not light us on our way until late.

In our geological ecstasies we have quite forgotten that the sun has set, and with our footprints gone, we will have to be very quick if we are to find our way home before the intense chill of the evening overtakes us.

The Howadji once owned a collie which sometimes missed his master in the throng of

hurrying people in the street. When this happened, he would dart off in one direction, and, not finding him, would return to the point of departure and dart off again another way in his search for his best friend. He never seemed to lose his bearings, and returned again and again to the dividing of the ways until he was successful in his quest. This the Howadji remembers, and now, he thinks, is the moment to copy his old intelligent herder of sheep. So while Sitt crouches down at the cairn to escape the fury of the wind, he sets out to discover the way which we have come such a few moments before. With Sitt as a pivot he makes several trips in various directions, until in the twilight he comes upon the end of a stone wall round which he remembers having climbed. This serves as one station on our backward journey to the river. These walls had been built above the temple to form slight barriers against the sand, and to turn it from its ordinary course into channels farther away from the temple,—to the north and to the south,—and they are just the landmarks we need to determine which descent to make. With this wall to guide us, and the wind to help, we plant our

feet in an abrupt declivity of sand ; and now we have little more to do than to free our feet and let our weight carry us down, sand and all. So arm in arm, and throwing our weight back, we fairly coast down. In the shelter of the hill we find our footprints there remaining, and footprints also of some jackals, which had evidently come down to the river from the hills the night previous.

It is only on finding these tracks that the Howadji realizes how uneasy he has been during the last half hour. Had we not soon appeared, the sailors would certainly have come in search of us, with Alli at their head ; but it would have been such an ignominious ending to this our first evening of exploration, for the reis had never before trusted us away from the dahabéah unescorted by several of the crew.

And here indeed is Alli at the foot of the hill, looking anxious ; and no sooner does he see our heads appearing over the top of the last sand slope than he calls to one of the crew to bring a lantern, but all he says to us, —  
“Come to tell Sitt dinner ready.”

There are lights shining from the cabin windows, our slippers are near the gangplank,

and the crew proffer their aid in divesting us of our sand-filled boots, for they are always jealous because Alli can apparently do so much more for our personal comfort than they.

How comfortable and sheltered our houseboat is after the sweeping winds on the top of that plateau ! and how delicious that simple dinner of stewed chicken and rice, with canned tomatoes, and blanc-mange of condensed milk to "taper off with," as a famous caterer used to say !

Sitt's usual complaint at dinner is that she has not been able to get enough exercise, but not so to-night.

Now that the water is so low, there is a bank, a mile and more long, left in midstream just opposite the temple, where Sitt walks each day, to get up an appetite for dinner ; but from the taste of this chicken and rice, she thinks she may be able to dispense with her regular pacing for a day or two.

The reis cannot understand why she takes this walk up and down on mud, — which is as hard as a sand beach, — and he sends two men to walk behind her. Almost daily this little procession can be seen wending its way,

for there is not a length of a hundred yards on the temple side which can serve as a track. On the opposite bank there is also the added advantage of seeing from this exercising ground the lovely reflections of topaz sand, amethyst hills, turquoise sky and river. It is easy to imagine all the colors of the celestial city, as given in Revelation. As Sitt does her three or four miles, the sailors look at her with wonder. They follow close at her heels, and row her back to the Terrapin later, in time for their midday naps. They have a strange capacity for napping, by the way, and never seem to get too much sleep; they can waken at a moment's notice, attend to any duty, and then drop fast asleep again, all within ten minutes. Now that we are moored and they have nothing to do but give the boat her morning scrubbing, they appear to divide their time equally between sleeping and wondering what the white people will want to do next. Everything that we do is to them a mystery; when the Howadji paints and sketches, sketches and paints, they are as interested as when the Sitt writes and sews, sews and writes, though less so, perhaps, than when she goes into that storeroom, where,

besides giving out the necessaries for the table, she is almost sure to find something they like. And after all it takes so little to please them. A small handful of raisins, a little piece of chocolate, a bowl of rice, or a loaf of stale white bread is all they want to make them happy.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE UNDISCOVERED TEMPLE

WHEN Howadji was a pupil at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts, his master, Cabanel, often sent him from the jolly painting studio to the galleries of antique casts below, insisting that he must draw from the antique, must make heavier drafts upon them for inspiration and for accuracy in drawing. The Howadji feels to-day that his master would indeed be satisfied to see him studying at the feet of this mighty work of art, this antique temple of Abou Simbel. He has gone even farther back than the counselor advised, — back of classic Rome, back of classic Greece, to the fountain which inspired their unflinching beauty and accuracy ; but he declares it is far enough, not only as to date, but as to latitude, and that he will go no farther.

He is enthusiastic over the beauty, the grandeur, and color of this monument, and has laid out work enough to last until sum-

mer. If Sitt, he says, wishes to see Wady-Halfa and Khartoum, she can take the boat and crew and sail alone ; all that he asks is a gun, some of the kitchen utensils, his paints, and — Alli Hassan. Sitt, however, has no idea of being sent adrift alone. So it is decided that Abou Simbel shall be the southernmost point of the Terrapin's voyage, and content with this chain of hills for landscape and Abou Simbel for temple, we shall sail back to the haunts of men and women, to say good-by to the fading century among some of our own age and nation, for it would indeed be hopeless to expect Rameses to awake to the realization that this nineteenth century is nearing its close, — to arouse him to the fact that *fin de siècle* will be out of style for many years to come.

But what is a century to these wonderful old fellows, sitting on their thrones as if to judge the world thousands of years and dozens of centuries in succession ? Yet they may never see another century, these statues which have looked down on so many ; they have been protected most of these years by the sand which buried them, — protected from the still more aged abou, Father Time.



There is no knowing how many centuries they must have lain hidden, to be unburied and resurrected in this the nineteenth century after Christ. Only for this, the early Copts would have destroyed them, would have chopped off their noses, perhaps hacked those expressive toes.

Neither the Christians nor Cambyses saw this monument, any more than Herodotus saw the Sphinx ; for Abou Simbel, like the Sphinx, must have been buried, and perhaps by some change in the currents of wind have been resurrected.

Monsieur de Maillet, French consul at Cairo, makes no mention of this temple in his description of Egypt published in 1735. Burckhardt, in 1813, found two heads appearing above the sand, while the entrance to the temple was thirty feet below the surface. In Miss Edwards's time — 1874 — the drift only rose "to the lap of the northernmost colossus, and but halfway up the legs of the next." Still a few years later Dudley Warner writes of climbing into the lap of one of the statues. Now — 1899 — even to climb into the lap is an undertaking. Warner says, "It is there only that you get

an adequate idea of the real size of the body. What a roomy lap! Nearly ten feet between the wrists that rest on the legs!" The facade and doorway of the temple were cleared for the empress of the French when, after the inauguration of the Suez canal, she made the ascent of the Nile.

The sand strengthened and preserved these great seated colossi, while all those which in the most distant way resembled them as to size and workmanship lie broken or shattered. The head and shoulders that have broken away must have fallen in very ancient days, when the plateau at the foot of the colossi was still kept cleared by order of the high priests or reigning dynasty, for had the masses fallen subsequently, they would have found no place to lodge, and have slipped from the sand incline into the very river itself. The repairs of the knees and legs go back as far as to the dynasty following that to which Rameses himself belonged.

The rifts as we find them now are so great, the crevices and cracks in the stone so deep, in these great figures, that if some moderns do not come to their rescue, and with care and science patch together the great pieces

which seem, as Sitt says, "hanging by a thread," down will come "baby, cradle and all."

In 1892 a Royal engineer, with some officers and men, arrived at Abou Simbel with a view to partially repairing the face and side of the rock temple. First they cleared away several enormous masses of overhanging rock which, had they fallen, must have inflicted great damage to the colossal statues below, and, having broken them into smaller pieces, used them for building walls at the head of the valley to prevent the drift sand from again burying the temple.

One of the colossi has lost head and shoulders beyond repair, and two others have broken away from the wall whence they were hewn by order of that architect of long ago, and a small earthquake, such as is felt in Egypt from time to time, would place them in great jeopardy. Then again it has rained at Assouan, and who knows how soon it may rain at Abou Simbel? With the increased irrigation, planting of trees, and holding up of the river by the new barrage, that it should rain even at Abou Simbel is not beyond an impossibility. A smart shower run-

ning into the crevices and cracks of the sandstone in the cool of early morning, then heated at midday, would bring these tons of sandstone thundering down.

Longest lived of all will be the southernmost figure. It is at present the most perfect, and stands, as it were, in a niche, — that is, if a seventy-foot high recess can be called a niche, — protected by its companions and the hillside from northern winds, and by the southern hillside from many hours of the sun's rays each day. Insurance experts would have very nice calculations to make in insuring these figures of the great king.

To the description of this temple in its marvelous setting of golden sand which Champollion, Wilkinson, Amelia Edwards, Dudley Warner, Budge, Sayce, and others have given, what can Sitt add? None of them can overdraw or exaggerate what we have come so far to see. As one goes back from the present into this far-away past, leaves the madding crowd of modern days for the lonely, sand-swept land of Nubia, a feeling of solemnity, and then almost of exaltation, possesses him. He is haunted by the spirit of the past. As he contemplates

its antiquity, the limitless ages, his mind dwells upon the very Creator of all things, whom he seems to be approaching very close. The feeling intensifies as the present is gradually left behind down river, and it is not surprising that a party of excursionists, visiting the temple at sunrise, should have fallen on their knees as they saw the ray which one special day in the year shoots in at the outermost portal of the great rock temple, back to the second chamber, then the third, then shines right into the cella, the holy of holies, where sits the king with the figures of three gods. Overwrought, you may say, half hysterical by the dramatic effect; impressed by what they cannot explain; — or a practical explanation may be that this half hour's excursion was taken before breakfast, before the inner man — that monster who will be appeased no matter at what inconvenience to our higher nature — has had his coffee and rolls.

The interior of the temple is in a wonderful state of repair, the coloring on the wall decorations is clear and bright, and many of the colossal figures of Osiris which support the roof are perfectly conserved. Whether

or not the outside was also colored has been a question, but it is a question which seems easily enough answered when we observe the color in the nostrils of the tumbled down head, and in the ornaments of the thigh drape of the figure to the north of the entrance door, and on the side which is protected from the north wind.

We are moored under the smaller rock temple, the first monument ever erected to a woman. The face of the cliff, about a hundred feet from the water's edge, — as the water now is, — has been smoothed away for over fifty feet, and the six figures stand in their niches. This temple was erected to the goddess of love, Hathor, whose representative was at that moment Nefertari, the queen of Rameses II.

The old inscriptions relate that "his majesty has commanded a temple to be made in the land of Khent in an excavation in the mountain; never was such a thing done before." Now this proves that the idea was original with the king himself, — this idea of cutting into the very face of the mountain, — and it also proves that this temple was the first of its kind.

Howadji's notion is that the king may have been disappointed with the carvings and modelings, and when he came to inspect the work, architects and sculptors may have had their heads cut off. For those who afterwards carved the temple hard by "buildd better," and profited, perhaps, by the sad fate of the makers of the very homely statues of the princesses which adorn (?) the smaller temple.

The interior is gained by a tall, narrow entrance, and for the full details of its wall inscriptions and decorations, see Baedeker's Egypt.

There is a legend that another temple, with other huge colossi, exists "four hours inland" from these noted ones on the river bank; but there is no way of proving whether this tradition has the least foundation. We have interviewed the old guardian, "who has lived about here for forty years," as to its existence. He has often heard of such a temple, it appears, but never seen it, and he brings us the sheik of the village—and where even this village is, we do not know.

"Did you ever see it?" we ask.

"No."

“Do you know any one who has ever seen it?”

“No.”

“Do you know the way to it?”

“Yes; four or five hours behind Abou Simbel.”

Now four or five hours behind Abou Simbel might sound very definite, had we not climbed to the top of the ridge and looked across that barren waste.

It seems that all the legends agree on the distance being “four hours;” and that cannot be far, for one goes slowly through the deep sand, the loose stones and rocks. But the question would be at what angle to start from. We can diverge at any of fifty angles from Abou Simbel, and how different the points at which we would bring up would depend upon the angle of departure. There are no camels or donkeys to be had in the neighborhood, so the journey must be made on foot; four hours out and four hours back, eight hours in all. The sun rises after seven in the morning and sets a little after five. We cannot start more than an hour before sunrise. That gives ten or more hours of light, and leaves two hours for re-



freshment and a view of the temple, — that is, if we find it. Were there camels, we might arrange to camp out for one night and make a sunrise sketch. Surely it would be a great thing to find and locate this legendary temple, a temple still unexplored by the Egyptologists.

“ You could find the road ? ” we question.

He nods his head ; “ Iowa ” (yes).

“ Will you guide us ? ”

“ La ! La ! ” (no ! no !) he exclaims, with a shudder. “ No one goes there, no living man has ever seen it ; no man can look upon it and live,” he hastily adds.

The Howadji turns to Alli, who is as usual our interpreter.

“ Alli, what do you think ? ”

“ Sheik big head, think he lie — never you mind.”

And thus our would-be discovery comes suddenly to an end ; and we can only say, in the words of our school-day friend, “ we know of it, but cannot tell you.”

It is suggested that perhaps this traditional temple lies under the beautiful avalanche of sand between the great and the smaller rock temples of Abou Simbel, just ready to

be discovered without such a haphazard journey as a four hours' walk across desert — angle of departure unknown.

During several hours of last night we were ready to believe in ghosts and goblins, in ghouls and river furies, in legends of their existence not only in the past but in the present, for the sandstorm, of which we had seen the beginning on the plateau above, grew in fury, and sleep was impossible.

The wind came down upon us at our mooring, turning each plank and each piece of cordage in this old boat into what seems a living presence. The rudder sighed, sobbed, and groaned to be let loose; the tighter he was lashed, the more he complained. The planks of the flooring, left loose the more easily to gain the shallow hold, all told each other funny "stories disparaging their friends," and rattled and shook with amusement at our discomfiture. The ropes whipped themselves into a mad fury against the boat, and sounded like a family of children being spanked (although our spanker was tightly furled and lashed). The river swished and swashed under the hull, lifted us up, dropped us down, ran up the little indentures in the

bank, and down again, trying to get into mischief. He told us what was going on further south, then ran on with his news to the next craft. The windows, the blinds, and the nettings all clapped their hands and played tom-tom against the window frames at the Europeans trying to sleep in a Nubian gale; for a veritable gale it was, and the noise as incessant as a squirrel going round and round in a cage. The wind sighed like the violins in the overture of some great work of Wagner, and it took but little imagination to hear the motive of Iseult's death, or the passing of the Valkyrie.

Who would think that such inoffensive things as flag halliards could make night hideous? Yet unless tied at a distance from the flagstaff, they will alone in their thin, mean way, murder sleep. It was impossible to make Reis Mohammed understand why we objected to these little creaking, squealing, pinching, screeching, grumbling sounds, to say nothing of the motion which waked us now and again — if perchance we had fallen asleep — with the feeling that there must be an earthquake.

There is no fitting square objects into round

holes, and there is no chance for land-lubbers like ourselves to get used to all the queer doings of a Nile houseboat in one season.

Each point of the Terrapin must be studied in turn, — how to keep her cool, how to ventilate without admitting a gale, how to bear all the strange noises when the gale is a reality. Lectures and lessons to those about to venture up the Nile would not come amiss, and might, perhaps, be as useful as Franklin's advice to those "about to take a sea voyage."

We find the prints of a small animal's feet near the chicken coop this morning; some canny four-footer who wished to profit by the noise and confusion of the gale to have a *volaille au voleur*, we think. Alli, however, is always expected to know of everything which comes or goes, and questioned as to what this was, replies, —

"Small like a dog — no dog — like dog — big tail not like dog — yellow not like sand."

We understand. Without doubt it was a jackal, and one of our early morning groanings must have scared off the little thief. Howadji decides that some night — not

to-night or to-morrow night — he will sit up and secure a jackal skin to take home, for the alligator market does n't seem to be held in Upper Egypt these years, and travelers must carry home some hunting trophies, must they not?

If you have had no shot at an alligator, we know where there is one, for Reis Mohammed saw one come down the cataract at Assouan. If the engineers have not pulled all the stones out of the cataract by the time we reach Shellal, we can without doubt find this alligator, for reis saw him only five years ago.

## CHAPTER XIV

### EARLY IMPRESSIONISTS

WITH Sunday morning comes a lull after Saturday's gale. The reflections of sky, sand, and rock are clear, so clear, as we start away in the felucca with four men to row upstream. Howadji does not open his paint-box on Sundays, save to catch some passing effect, which he declares never has its like on week days, and he does not turn out at sun-up as on the other days of the week. This Sunday we are to go to church four miles away, — to a Christian church, that is to say, a rock chamber which was a Christian church centuries ago, and a rock temple centuries before that.

Hewn out of the rocky headland, and decorated for the cult of ancient Nubia, it was later taken by some of Bishop Theodosius's followers, who overlaid and defaced the Horuses, the Thoths, the Muts, and other heathen decorations, frescoing over them, in

colored washes, figures of Saint John, Saint George, and even of the Saviour. The outline of the life-size figure of Saint George on horseback can easily be traced, for the coloring of his gay apparel — he is here dressed as a Turk — is quite apparent. Many of the colors of these frescoes are yet clear and bright, though the more ancient figures show through here and there — producing, for all the world, the appearance of a composite photograph. In many of the ancient temples are figures of horses and donkeys unattended, and in others of horses harnessed to chariots, but in this little rock temple appears the only figure on horseback — that is, the only one we remember.

These decorations, however, only go back to some date early in this era, and cannot therefore be taken as examples of Egyptian temple decoration. The original decorations are cut in the soft limestone in low relief. A thin coating of plaster was laid on them to fill up the grain of the sandstone, and upon this white plaster surface the Egyptian deities were painted in flat tones of different colors. The low relief, with artistically rounded edges, gives a delightful effect of shading.

Over this first work the Copts — or “dogs of Christians,” as they are called — white-washed liberally, and then employed some impressionist painter upon the wall spaces. His work was vulgarly conceived, badly drawn, and badly colored; the sooner, therefore, it passes away, the better. Far better no *soi-disant* sacred subjects at all than anything which offends and lowers — better the more ancient ones which will be found almost intact when some traveler on the Cape to Cairo Limited stops over a train to visit this strange rock temple.

Sitt finds that fifteen to twenty minutes is all that she can stand in one of these old holes in the rock. There is a close, hot odor of bats, and as soon as the lights awake these creatures further investigation is impossible for her. So she takes refuge in the national “bockra” (to-morrow), and finds that even “bad bockra” (day after to-morrow) is soon enough.

The other day Sitt had the courage to enter certain inner chambers of the great rock temple of Abou Simbel to study some of the wall decorations which are noted, and worthily so. Several of the sailors lighted



her way with candles attached to pieces of stick, and as a special compliment the reis himself carried high in air the Rochester lamp. And to this lamp must be attributed the awakening in one of the chambers of what seemed a million bats. They had grown too accustomed to candles of various qualities to be much put out by them, but before an American lamp they rebelled. As they had the prior claim, Sitt decided to retire, which she did in all haste and with very little ceremony, indeed scarcely in good form. She will doubtless on future occasions study those special rooms in the guide-book rather than *in propria persona*.

To which of the old Egyptian deities was the white owl sacred? It must have been the goddess or god of twilight, for at this hour each day a white owl flies round the corner of the rocky headland, and vanishes into the innermost depths of the temple. Does he go to take counsel of one of the strange figures which sit in a row in the cella of the temple, and upon whom the sun shines but once in the year, or is it to feast upon those millions of bats? What a feast he must have, to be sure. Let us hope that

he takes some home to his family in the early morning, after his night of revel and feasting. Every now and then he gives a little hoot of delight as he flies back and forth, and makes a tempting shot as he comes recklessly near us. But we are fond of white visions. Perhaps some evening he will bring his mate to the feast, or appear with a youngster or two to train in his wicked ways of stopping out all night.

From the little temple of Gebel Addeh it was but a short row to the ruins of the long ago deserted fortress of Addeh. This commanding headland was once a Saracen possession, though for how many centuries deserted, "we will not tell;" and on the top of the heights are the ruins of a large town.

Addeh is on the opposite bank from Abou Simbel, and between these points there may have been continuous lines of habitations, whose people must have lived by the levying of heavy toll upon those who passed up or down stream, for they certainly did not thrive from the arable land in this region. There is but a narrow strip on one side of the river, while on the other are only rocks or sand. A

temple of such magnificence would naturally point to a surrounding country of importance, within a few hours' journey by land or water of the abode of peoples and their rulers.

The history of the Saracens is so picturesque that we would fain know more of this fortress of Addeh, whence we have our southernmost view of the Nile and the Libyan desert. Looking from the top of it, as far as we can see with eyes alone, and with strong field-glasses, stretches an endless waste of golden sand, with little pyramidal shaped hills, red rock headlands, and the Nile appearing like a sea-serpent, twining, curving, turning away, away, away, out of the picture.

They tell us of good stores to be bought at Halfa, and of a railroad on to Khartoum, and then to all the country that Du Chaillu and Livingstone made interesting to our youth; and then, with mighty jumps many leagues to the south, we have many friends in battle array in the Transvaal.

The imagination once started finds it hard to draw a line; when one is seven hundred miles up the Nile, why not make it a thousand and even more? But to the idea

of pushing on further, Sitt only answers, "Home again, home again, jig-ady-jig."

When we next come, Khartoum will be a real village, perhaps a flourishing city of red brick houses, with gay white marble trimmings ; with a government house on the site where Gordon's residence once stood ; with a war office, a court of justice, a post-office, a prison ; with a great college, where the youth of the Soudan will receive a civil service education, and a special department will be established for young women. This college is announced as "primarily for the sons of the Sheiks, one hundred and fifty of whom it will undertake to train in the knowledge of telegraphy, engineering, and kindred practical sciences, side by side with elementary scholastic subjects."

With all these buildings in progress, the stranger, the traveler in the land, has not been forgotten, for there is a hotel going up which will in the course of a few months be open to sixty guests ; and in the mean time there is comfortable lodging on the railroad sleepers, and in the government steam wheelers — on the river.

Now our crew have never thought of our

pushing on to Khartoum, but they have expected to go to Halfa. The cook says he wishes to visit his brother at Halfa — but we have been already warned not to let him go, and the crew have friends and old acquaintances to be looked up there. How shall we break it to them that they will go no farther than this rock headland of Gebel Addeh ?

## CHAPTER XV

### THE RAMESES LIMITED EXPRESS

ONE of the living presences for us along the Upper Nile stretch is Miss Edwards. Is it because of a certain turn she gives her sentences, or is it her way of word painting? We are not sure, but certain it is that she and Rameses II. are for us two living presences. We had promised ourselves each day since mooring to search out "her tomb," as we always call it, — the tomb discovered by one of her party, — but each day till now has been full. Her history says it is toward the south of the great temple. Since toward the south the rock sheers off to the river, it is preferable to skirt the shore in the felucca to the given point. On starting Sitt perceives several votive tablets, interesting but effaced, and a marble tablet set into the rock in memory of some of those who fell in the campaign in 1884, with its inscription both in English and Arabic. There are pages in Miss Ed-

wards's guide about the discovery of her tomb, the finding of first one chamber, then another; so the little sail is hoisted, and the shore hugged, while Sitt peers into every crevice in the rock.

Since Alli could not go along as interpreter, being busy keeping the flies off Howadji, and the cook, who also speaks pigeon English, was kept busy wrestling with the dinner question, Sitt is alone with reis and his four sailors, who have been clearly told that she wishes to find the dôm, to which two of the sailors at once declare they know the way.

Baedeker's guide says, "A little to the south of the colossi;" it may therefore be but a hundred yards off, yet again it may be a half mile. As the half mile grows into a mile, Sitt becomes impatient and orders the sail lowered, murmuring the while, "Dôm, dôm."

"Iowa" (yes), says the reis.

There must be some mistake, but where the mistake is, Sitt cannot imagine.

The sailors are now making ready to disembark; the reis brings the felucca alongside the bank and holds his hand out to Sitt, indicating that the spot has been reached, and that the dôm is within walking distance.

Up the bank moves the little procession to the level of the ploughed land, but so far as she can see there is nothing which resembles a dôm. After walking for five minutes through very deep sand the sailors gather under a palm-tree which looks as if it had been struck by lightning, and indicate that the object of the expedition is reached, saying in chorus, "Dôm ; dôm palm."

The revulsion of feeling is great ; Sitt bursts out into almost hysterical laughter at the misunderstanding. She has said "dôm" when she should have said "birbie," and they have brought her all this way to see this stricken dôm palm, which has a poor old worn trunk and but two or three withered leaves.

After the good laugh, the reason of which she cannot explain for lack of an interpreter, she says, "Dahabéah," and apparently satisfied that they have shown her what she asked for, the sailors turn about, and the felucca being reëntered, they row downstream with the current.

Thwarted, but still determined to find that tomb, Sitt decides to ask the old guardian of the temple, for he must certainly have heard



of Sitt Edwards's wonderful discovery of 1874.

"The Sitt was sitting in there yesterday," is his answer. Evidently he too fails to grasp the subject as she puts it, so Alli is called, and after full explanation and much chattering between the two — for does not an unknown foreign language always sound like chattering? — Alli says: —

"Room where Howadji light he pipe every day — every day when the wind blow; — where guardian sleep," adds Alli.

Not that little room where some painters who came up last year to Abou Simbel made a fire and were hauled over the coals by the authorities, thinks Sitt; not that little room twelve by nine feet, with apparently no other chambers leading from it! What a disappointment!

She remembers other disappointments, such as the Palatine Hill in Rome, where there is so much more indicated on the maps and in the guides than she was ever able to find on the hill itself. Those disappointments, however, belong to days when she was a very young sightseer, when she went to look for long arcades and covered porches and ban-

queting halls as drawn by various worthy authorities, and in each case found very little on which to build all the descriptions, measurements, and details.

In the case of this tomb, she thinks it must be the sand which is to blame, of whose relentless encroachments we have a daily instance in the path which leads from our dahabéah to the great temple: each morning the men must dig it out, for every twenty-four hours the sand covers it.

Had Sitt, however, followed Miss Edwards's guide a little more closely, she would probably have found the spot more easily, for that reads: "Southwards and past the Great Temple climbed to the top of a little shapeless mound of fallen cliff and sand and crude brick wall just against the corner where the mountain slopes down the river." Like everything else in life, it seems very clear when you know all about it. Perhaps the most interesting line in connection with Miss Edwards's original discovery is: ". . . on the space of blank wall over the inside of the doorway, and this was the only occasion upon which any of us left our names on any Egyptian monument." The writing is still visible, and

consists of half a dozen names, with the date, February 16, 1874. One can still decipher them — if one knows beforehand what they are ; but strange enough, the one which is the least decipherable is that of the historian of the tomb herself — A. B. Edwards.

We are all what is called “countrified.” This getting up before the sun and going to sleep before 8 p. m. would be the best cure for nervous prostration. No hurry about shopping engagements, no shuffling out of receiving callers where there are no callers to interrupt work or repose. Such closeness to nature, such freedom, is hard to find in this century, where everything is tuned more or less to concert pitch. Try it all ye who are overtired with faces and even with friends. At the end of a few weeks you will find the “sleaves of care” so well knitted together that to return to everyday occupation and see again the faces of friends will be a real delight. There can be no such short method of reducing one’s mental temperature to normal. The long enduring, placid, go-on-the-same-century-after-century atmosphere of these temples, these tombs, and this river scenery is a sweet balm.

But we know you will not do it in this simple, slow way; *tout au contraire*. You will begin by telegraphing from New York for a fast steam dahabéah; you will take one of the record-breaking transatlantic greyhounds; you will be quickly transferred to the London and Oriental express and then to the Isis or Osiris, the mail steamers between Brindisi and Alexandria. In this you will be churned and tumbled about—for the mail must arrive on time, and passengers' comfort is a second consideration; and you may roll in your berths till your back and sides are bruised. Then across Alexandria in a tumble-down carriage, with two poor old thin horses galloping in a weak way under the lash of a native driver in red turban and white gallabuyah, with a flying shawl wrapped about his throat. You will sit on the edge of the broad leather seat of the railroad carriage from Alexandria to Cairo and try to hurry the train along. Do all you can, you cannot assist the engine; and you will not arrive one moment sooner than if you curl yourself up in the corner of one of these yard-wide leather seats like the official opposite, who sits quietly, lets the train take

care of itself, while he reads, "À quoi tient la supériorité de l'Anglo-Saxon."

Once in Cairo, the scene should be sufficient to interest and amuse even the nervous American; but after two days he begins again to fuss and fume, to feel that he has "done Cairo," and must "get on."

Hats, veils, green-lined umbrellas, medicines for all kinds of complaints which may attack him, guns for the sport he is never to come up with, are quickly got together, and with dragoman on the carriage box he races through the new quarter of Cairo to cross the bridge before the midday draw is open. Yes, there is the dahabéah moored in the distance; the flag is flying, the stores are on board, the easy chairs look inviting to those who have time to sit in them; the crew squat like so many vultures along a ledge of the bank. The steady pace of the horses is in no way relaxed; across the island, over another bridge, along the banks, and owner, guests, and luggage are soon on board. Something has been forgotten; back flies the dragoman to the city as quickly as the same horses can take him, and the owner and his guests hang over the railing and strain their

eyes to catch the first glimpse of his returning form; for until he comes they cannot start.

The steam is up, there is a bouquet in each lady's hand, — a present from the dragoman, — the whistle blows, and the start is made.

All the beauty of the left bank, the old palaces along the river front, the citadel and its minarets, the Mokattam Hills, and the picturesque old windmills, all are lost on these travelers, whose only thought is, not to enjoy a leisurely holiday, but to break the Nile record. Sakkarah, old Memphis, and the tomb of Ti are on the programme for tomorrow morning, but all enjoyment is lost because of the limited time for sightseeing, even in the most cursory manner.

They race, they tear, the donkey boys cry aloud and beat their willing little beasts, the dust is choking, and the sun hot. In spite of hurry, and a lunch gobbled down, with but a glance taken of the marvelous Sераpeum, of the prostrate colossal figure, and of the old tombs, the whole day is, as they graphically declare, "lost" in this excursion, and it is almost dark before they feel the throb of the propelling engine of the steam dahabéah. There is a most resplendent

sunset, but no one has time to look at it; every one is getting ready for dinner, which must not be one moment late, though the skies are of all the loveliest tints of violet, rose, or Nile green. Such skies are not often seen even in Egypt, the land of wonderful color effects, but no one seems to realize this, nor to see the marvelous reflections in the river's mirror.

The fastest Nile steamer is slow in comparison with an ocean steamer, and our friends find, by the time they reach Luxor, that they have had enough of the Nile. So they return to Cairo, having indeed broken the record as to speed, but having failed to come into touch with anything along the way. They have chafed at the loss of a single minute, have not learned the difference between a temple and a tomb, and are full of wonder at one of their relatives in her wind dahabéah, who does not even object to sticking on a mud-bank. Such is the way not to do the Nile, but alas! a way in which it is in these days too often done.

It is not an unheard-of experience for those who start out in one of the sailing dahabéahs to throw up their contract at the end of

a few days, — at no small pecuniary loss to themselves, — and return to Cairo by train, taking away with them nothing but a recollection of the flies, the heat, the dust, and some false “antiquas” palmed off on them by traders who have received the things from English and German manufactories.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PHANTOM BOAT

THE air is so mild this evening that we give way to the temptation to sit up to see the moon rise, which will be about 9.30 to-night. During the early days of our voyage we had dinner at 7.30, and tried to read until our usual bed hour. But the days are so short that the Howadji had to shut his paint-box a little after five, and it was long to wait until 7.30 for dinner; so the festive repast has gradually slipped forward to six; and we count on our daily inspection of the temple in all the changes of twilight, and the sight of the first stars of the evening shining out. Alli watches closely over his master, and by the time the first star throws its long light across the river — for the stars seem strangely near in this latitude — he is sure to appear with a lantern to light us down the path, while he proclaims the welcome news that “dinner most ready.”

So dinner is at six, and the Howadji and Sitt generally exchange solemn promises to tell no one — neither friends nor relatives — at what hour the candles for bed are lighted. Perhaps, however, some one can guess on reading that this evening we sit up until the extraordinary hour of 9.30. But having once witnessed the moon rise in all its glory, we quickly slip away to bed, for it does not do to burn the candle at both ends even in Nubia, and be it remembered we are always up before sunrise.

On this particular evening there is no telling exactly how long every one has been asleep when the distant throb of a steamboat is audible. No post-boat up or down river is due; no excursion boat has been announced for to-night; but nearer and nearer come the sounds, and Howadji's sleepy head is stuck far enough out of his cabin window to see the lights of a steamer as she goes upstream on the other side of the sand-bar, so near the opposite shore that it is wonderful she does n't run on a sand-bank. We know there is scarcely enough water over there for our felucca, and wonder whether it may not be a phantom ship; but she finds depth

enough, and steams on with regular throbs of her engines, and, late as it must be, a row of lights in her cabin windows.

Our curiosity but half satisfied, we again go to sleep.

This morning we hear from Alli, who knows all, that what we had seen was not a wabu (steamboat). There was an eclipse of the moon during the night, and the natives of the opposite shore formed in procession, and with lights and beating of great tom-toms, marched alongshore to frighten the devil, who they said was eating up the moon.

Their movements and their passing lights produced the phantom ship which had sailed up river so mysteriously in such shallow water.

Our nearest post-office is a mile up shore on the other side of the river; or more accurately, sometimes one mile and sometimes two, for it is in reality the capacious pocket of an old native, trusted by the government. We never know exactly where we shall find it, when we go over to post letters, unless by some chance an unexpected post-boat coming along does us the kindness to stop. Such is the Feraig post-office, marked with a star on

the maps, and relied on by all the surrounding fellaheen.

How simple certain things which we may have dreaded for weeks prove to be. Instead of the men being cast down and mutinous at not going up to Wady-Halfa, they are delighted to hear that we shall soon be turning our faces northward and downstream. "Should old acquaintance be forgot?" It is apparently to be so on this occasion, for the men have said nothing more about their friends at Halfa, and the cook has never again made a plea to go there to see his brother. Perhaps they picture to themselves too clearly the many days' rowing to get the Terrapin down to Shellal, taking the boat through the eddies and little whirlpools, where, but for the strokes of the oar, she will go round and round like a lovesick ostrich. They can also, perhaps, foresee many of the sand-banks on which we are to stick, and from which they will have to dislodge this Terrapin of ours, and start her once more on her journey downstream, only to find her stuck in the mud several yards further on; for, of course, the water has been steadily decreas-

ing these weeks we have been moored at Abou Simbel. All that Alli remarks when he hears we are to go no further is, "Never you mind, all dead here;" the interpretation of which may be that the pleasant crowds of Cairo are more to him than all the Rameses monuments.

Miss Edwards mentions that coming down they spent eighteen days shilly-shallying, dawdling, where they might have done the same distance in four. Oh, that better luck may attend us! for if all our time is spent in transit, or rather in turning round and round, how is Howadji to do the sketching of different points which he marked in his mental notebook on our way up?

We have learned in the last few days that we should have had permission from the military authorities before sailing up into the Soudan. We should n't half object to their sending a paddle-wheel steamer to overtake us and bring us down, for that would give us all the sooner a chance to ask the permission which was by inadvertence neglected. All above the first cataract is under military rule, and it behooves one to be very particular in getting this permission, even if

it is two months late. In a few days the Howadji will have finished the painting he has laid out for this season at Abou Simbel, and then a paddle-wheel steam tug to pull us over the sand-bars would be better than going it alone like a twirling dervish, coquetting and curtsying with every palm-tree along the river bank.

A mouse is in the stores! Sitt, the sailors, and the cook are all unable to catch him in the first efforts; but he darts here and there once too often, and is at last caught by the tail. To the surprise of all of us, his tail comes off! So Sitt supposes that he will run away and raise a new family of tailless or Manx mice. Perhaps he belongs to the mouse tribe which cut the Assyrians' bow-strings when the Egyptians went out to fight the hosts of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. We have no bow-strings to nibble, but many things that perhaps the mice of these days like better.

The crew's rations are so low that we may be implored to give of our plenty, and though it is n't in the contract to feed them, they would not mind our breaking it in this particular. In fact, that contract seems made

to be broken. We had supposed that native bread could be bought alongshore, but the people of this latitude do not seem to eat bread, and our servants are really in need of their strange flat little loaves, in substance more like the Mexican tortillas than anything Sitt has elsewhere seen.

The purser of the last up-going mail-boat promised to invest some shillings for us in bread at Halfa, and to slow up the next day on his down voyage to pass the bag over to us. The servants were expectant, and were the first to hear the steamboat's paddle-wheels. Hastily the felucca was manned, and rowed out in midstream to meet her; but away went flying downstream boat and bread and crew's stores. We are at a loss to know what has become of the purser and his promises. Why such treatment, why such disdain? Of course all our guesses prove wrong, and we only learn why by accident, when some excursionists, who come downstream a few days after, report that the Sirdar, Lord Kitchener, was aboard that steamer, having been telegraphed to drop his land schemes, his college and city projects at Khartoum, and to hurry down to meet cer-

tain of Her Majesty's forces, shortly to pass through the Suez Canal on their way to the Transvaal. Bread for the hungry and mails for the stranger were of no account to His Majesty the Sirdar. Sitt says she shall not feel avenged until she writes to the "Times" about it.

So our sailors eat our stores, and our mail is left over for another week, and we make many bitter remarks, — for one feels so far from enlightenment and civilization when mail facilities fail, — which remarks are borne away by the soft, gentle breezes of this sweet Nubian air, and never hurt any one or any thing. The pocket of the peripatetic post-office must be full of letters by this time. We shall have a week to add postscripts to them, and perhaps before the week is over we may be ready to take them downstream ourselves.

There are, after all, a few natives in this section ; we had had evidence of their existence the night of the moon's eclipse, but more when the excursionists happened along. Then from behind almost every stone they popped up, fixed hungry eyes upon these travelers, followed their every motion, and



offered them the veriest rubbish to buy. Then when the excursionists had finally left, and were only a boat's length away, the earth apparently opened and swallowed up little ones, big ones, whole families in fact. And the resurrection day will be when the next excursion comes along.

We feel like frauds, for when we move about there is never a native to dog our footsteps, it being believed that we are engineers, as has been given out. Our Terrapin is well known as a boat which has carried first one party of busy workers and then another who were not free with backsheesh. Some of these parties the natives have known to count the trees, the huts, and the people, and to write it all down in a book; others to plant tall, smooth poles, at regular intervals along the bank, with never-ending wires. If any luckless native should touch one of these poles or interfere with these workers, he might be sent in chains to Assouan. So any one sailing in the Terrapin is to be avoided. For these Nubians and Soudanese are like all other blacks, — afraid of anything they do not understand. Even the Dervishes, on seeing the

Scotsmen in their kilts, are reported to have said that if women in petticoats fight so hard, what must the men of that nation be? Our sailors know too much to mistake the Highlanders for women, but they are none the less astonished each time that Sitt shows any knowledge of sailing or of directing the boat, and they call her "Sitt Reis."

When the shrill whistle of the incoming excursion boat sounded, the old and young women, the boys and little girls, all appeared. The women seemed to object to close scrutiny. According to Miss Martineau, the villages on the opposite shore are noted for the production of a special kind of straw mats, a supply of which her party bought at advantage and used on subsequent journeys through the Holy Land. Nothing of the sort is offered for sale now, only Soudanese weapons; these weapons from Khartoum are the last thing, the *dernier cri*, as they say in Paris when a modiste makes a new departure. The trouble with them is that they are as new as anything a Parisian modiste can make; their makers have not yet discovered that bloodstains upon the blades would greatly enhance their value.

One woman offered the excursionists a sword of rather superior manufacture ; it was over a yard long in its red leather scabbard, and from the hilt dangled a green silk cord and tassel which once belonged to a priest's garment. For this weapon she asked two pounds, and would not, apparently, take less. This sword was the clou of a very motley collection of bric-à-brac, which included the petrified tooth of a hippopotamus, a fox skin, which looked as if it had been the toy of the village pups, a small conch-shell, some modern glass beads, the key of a sardine can, and a little wooden image from a child's Noah's ark. These were all offered as "antiquas." The tooth and fox skin indeed looked well worn ; but the sword was of the last Manchester pattern, the key of the sardine can doubtless came from our own boat, and the Noah's ark figure dated as far back as the time when the last American baby went up the Nile.

One of the women who squatted on the bank had the most fanciful of head decorations ; instead of the customary little pat of mud smeared on the end of each of the several dozen small plaits, her little pig-tails

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NUBIAN WOMAN



were finished off with a bit of yellow-tinted clay.

The boys squatted along in a row, — sat on their heels, as the Egyptians do for hours, — as alike as so many sparrows on a telegraph wire. How can even their parents tell them one from another? the mistake must often be made of thrashing some one's else boy; but the same end is probably attained if, after so many days, each member of the circle has been chastised for a sinning brother.

While the excursionists remained, the native crowd stopped all night on the bank, huddled closely together, for the night was cold. They may have crept away, after all the steamboat cabins were dark, to sleep in the tombs; but when the sun rose, there they were all in a row, as if the line had not been broken all night; and their eyes were fastened on the stewards as they passed to and fro on the decks. Soon we learned what these urchins were hoping and waiting for. No sooner had the steward with broom and brush pushed a lot of refuse overboard than into the water the black rascals scrambled, regardless of wetting their one and only gar-

ment. Every kind of rubbish and garbage was in their line; if a small crust or an empty bottle came overboard, they fought for it, as they did later for some of the small pieces of money tossed to them by the passengers.

All this while, never a native approached our boat nor crossed our boundary marked with stones, and now that the steamer has gone, all have vanished silently. They said good-by neither to us nor to our crew, who lay about on the bank waiting for their breakfast, which the little cook was preparing. He is a wonderful boy, this little Nubian cook! He seems always to have plenty of everything, plenty of wood, — and oddly enough the ends of his wood have been cut like our own oven wood which is stored in the hold; we wonder where he finds sawed wood in this country. He is a wonderful boy! His bread always gives satisfaction, his stews are always as much sought after as if they were delicate entremets from Gagé or Delmonico. He is in every way what may be called a success. How few of us can feel that of our friends, or even of ourselves.

The moon was very contrary last night.

We who have been many nights at Abou Simbel could regard her behavior with more equanimity than could the dozen excursionists who had but one evening to see the great temple in her full light. They sat up late and patiently watched, but she was veiled by heavy clouds, such as are not seen twice a year at Abou Simbel. This morning there is none of the brilliant sunshine which has marked each day for weeks ; banks of clouds far off and heavy, near and opaque, quite obscure the sun, which, even now that it is midday, resembles the cold, dreary sun of northern Europe that for some months scarcely deserves the name of sun.

What is happening to our friends in colder climes can be imagined from the drop in the mercury from 95° yesterday to 60° at midday to-day.



## CHAPTER XVII

### DISMANTLED

YESTERDAY Sitt notified the reis that the Howadji's work would soon be finished, and he could give orders for dismantling the Terrapin, that she might be ready to begin her downstream voyage. In twenty minutes the men were all as busy as when a commander orders "all aloft" to prepare for a coming gale, and what they did suggested to us what pirates and wreckers may have done to captured crafts in days gone by.

The long yard was the first tooth to be pulled; the first one of this gay bird's feathers to be plucked. Our pennant no longer fluttered from the great height, but was furled while the great sail was taken down. The lower deck became a scene of confusion, with cordage strewn about, braces of wood to hold the now horizontal instead of upright boom, bands of canvas to tie around the sail, now that it was down. The figger was

brought forward and rigged to the main-mast. All the hatchways of the sailor's deck were removed, and behold! narrow pieces of the deck remained, which made narrow seats for the rowers; and as the three feet depth of hold was too deep to give the sailors' feet any purchase, inclined boards with cleats were placed for all the men, — the same methods which doubtless served in ancient days, save that the rowers (slaves) were then chained to their benches. The twenty-foot sweeps were soon shipped and tied to the iron rowlocks, and heavy weights of stone wrapped with old clothes were fastened near the handles of the oars, the better to balance these unwieldy implements. Tons of stone were piled in the bows and the boat "weighed down by the head," — why, Sitt is unable to tell, and adds this to the list of things about which she must ask whenever she meets any one who dares affirm that he knows how to sail a dahabéah. In the midst of all these proceedings a friend from one of the excursion boats near by came aboard, and was deeply interested in the various original methods of hauling ropes and lowering spars, and in each point of our houseboat. We explained how in a few

hours she had lost her graceful lines, though she had become tauter and trimmer. The Howadji declared that she most resembled a scow, a term to which Sitt took exception. But he quoted the dictionary, — “Scow, a large flat-bottomed boat; the word is in use in New England,” and so Sitt was forced to waive her objection, and to acknowledge that Howadji remembered his native New English, even in the Soudan.

The reis has left us our upper deck intact, and here we lounge to contemplate the many changes which have come to us even in an hour.

After that faithless purser steamed by with the men's stores, we sent some of the crew in the felucca to Halfa to provide themselves with needed things, and now we are impatiently awaiting their return; for, once back, off we will go. The reis declares that they will certainly be back “bochra,” and since he is always right, we surely expect to turn our faces northward not later than to-morrow in the morning.

We might have trusted the reis and cooped all the chickens when they went to roost that evening; but there is always one thing for-

gotten, and in the morning those chickens are out as usual, bright and early. Though tame when we first arrived, their weeks of freedom have told on them, and they are now as wild as young keets when the servants try to get them aboard. Alli, the two cooks, and one or two of the sailors herd them without success for a full half hour. Then Alli, who is more familiar with donkeys and camels than with chickens, gives up the chase, and brings Sitt the gun, as if she were in the habit of shooting anything which gives any trouble. Meanwhile the others succeed in cornering them, and in transferring our barnyard to the bow of the boat.

Now the reis cries, "Felucca, Howadji."

Yes, there is a boat, but much larger than our felucca.

"Fen?" (where).

"Kidder" (beyond).

The Howadji, with a field-glass, is finally able to discern a red speck which the reis had in fact seen with the naked eye. The water glints from the oars as they are raised; they will soon be here, for the little row-boat is coming with the current, and we give Reis Mohammed one more white chalk-mark.

An hour later the men are at the sweeps ; even the little cook lends his aid as we swing round into the current. The reis takes the tiller, of course, and the current takes us. The sweeps are but dipped into the water now and again to keep our head downstream. We stop for no farewell visit to the great rock temple which looks so grand in the early morning light. We have much enjoyed these weeks of adoration of old Abou, and do not leave him without a regret. He looks so unmoved over our departure that we catch, as it were, his spirit, and complacently see him grow less hour by hour, and finally disappear. He knows, however, that we cannot get beyond his influence this day, nor for many days after. He must know something of his power, for why do men come so far to see him, and use up all the adjectives of the English, French, and German languages in the effort fitly to tell of his beauty and grandeur ?

The mercury was but 60° this morning at 10 A. M. At midday the temperature was higher, of course ; but this evening it became very cold because of a north wind. This makes further progress impossible. We

have floated down but five miles to-day, and now lie tied beneath some beautiful palm-trees, which strike us anew with their beauty after the weeks of gazing upon desert and rocks. We have to tell ourselves over and over that it is the twenty-fourth of December, that it is Christmas Eve. Our friends in the north are doubtless wading through slush and snow to finish their last Christmas shopping, while we go ashore to wander through groves of beautiful palm-trees, through fields over which spread bean-plants covered with the largest bean-pods that we have thus far seen, more like what the peasants of France term horse-beans. Five miles above we have heard scarce a bird's note, while here swallows are darting across our path, larks rising from the fields with joyous note, and birds we cannot see sing in the luxuriant palm foliage.

We see many workers in the field, some women carrying their infants astride their shoulders, some older children very lightly clad for so cool a December day. No one shows any interest in us, — the interest indeed is all on our side, — no one tries to sell us anything, no one begs for backsheesh.

The women appear to have spent much time on their coiffures, for their hair is in the little classical plaits which can be seen even in the old papyri, and beads hang across their foreheads. They are better fed and clothed than many of the women we have seen on this journey, but appear far from really human. Superior animals, if you will, but so little superior! They slink away like timid dogs, and if we manage to get near a group, they crouch down like hinds and look up at us strangely from under the rows of plaits which swing about their faces.

In answer to a whole sentence in good Christmas Eve Arabic, all that Sitt gets for reply is, "Mafeesh Arab," which translated freely means that she does n't understand Arabic; and since Sitt has not profited by the last few weeks' sojourn to get up a Berber vocabulary, she can only rejoin, "Mafeesh Berber."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CHRISTMAS DAY

THE only thing which Sitt finds in her stocking on Christmas morning is a water-bug; and a big one indeed,—as big as a small mouse. What a Christmas present it would have been for the hedgehog! but alas! for him, that hedgehog left us one night about a fortnight ago. He had been moved ashore on reaching Abou Simbel along with all the rest of our live stock, but that night his box was left open too long, and “never no more hedgehog,” said Alli.

There were as usual a lot of jackal tracks the next morning which helped us to imagine his end, and also the feelings of the jackal after dining on such a prickly thing; but perhaps the jackal has the digestion usually attributed to the ostrich, and does not object to dining on a buzz-saw.

We are to make no twenty miles this Christmas Day, for “the north wind doth blow.”



Yes ; the wind would be called a norther in the Gulf of Mexico, or a mistral in the Gulf of Lyons, and all prudent captains would tie up.

Our only pastime is a long walk on shore.

But we cannot walk all day, and time hangs heavily on our hands. We read aloud for a while, or discuss the weather, and linger as long as possible over our simple meals. It is the longest Christmas Day we have ever known. The feeling that we are far from home and friends and can join in no gathering round yule log or bowl of egg-nogg would be depressing were it not for the consoling fact that in this climate yule logs and egg-nogg could not appeal to any one. We had taken the precaution to bring along some canned Christmas pudding, but we had n't the courage to open a box, having already had one experience with these puddings. It was delicious, to be sure, but we had enough for the next day, and the next, and the next ; we had it hot, we had it cold, but it seemed scarcely to diminish. At last the crew finished it, for we never could. Then, too, turkey and plum pudding need not only their accompanying sauces of ice and snow

to make them appetizing, but crisp Christmas air. All these are as necessary as wind to a Nile dahabéah.

Now we are meeting one of those exceptions to the rule that a dahabéah needs wind, for while we wish to be let alone and drift downstream, Boreas comes upon us and holds us just where we are, turning round and round in midstream.

The Howadji thinks he has made a discovery, — the way to sail a dahabéah as given in an old copy of Herodotus, — and proceeds to follow it.

“These vessels are unable to sail upstream unless a fair wind prevails, but are turned from the shore,” he reads.

“But one does n’t have to go back to Herodotus to know that,” Sitt interrupts, and starts to give her experience as gained in the last few weeks. “Don’t I know” —

But the Howadji stops only long enough to keep his pipe lighted, then he reads on : —

“To sail downstream, a hurdle is constructed of tamarisk (‘But where are we to get tamarisk?’ — from Sitt), wattled with bands of reeds. (‘But we have n’t seen any reeds for five hundred miles’) . . . A stone

of about two talents in weight is bored through the middle. ('But how are we to bore any such hole in any such stone?') . . . The hurdle is fastened to a cable and let down at the prow of the vessel to be carried on by the stream, and the stone by another cable at the stern; and by this means the hurdle, by the stream bearing hard upon it, moves quickly and draws along the vessel; but the stone which is dragged at the stern and sunk to the bottom keeps the vessel in her course."

"But we have n't made any of these preparations," adds Sitt, as she continues to disparage the *trouvaille*, for when the Howadji becomes experimental, he also becomes dangerous.

If Sitt approves this newly found theory, he may go so far as to take the hencoop for a hurdle, and bore holes in the small boat, fill it with stones, and tie it to the stern instead of the two-talent stone with a hole in it. But he is still undecided as to whether the foregoing scheme is better than another which calls for a log attached to the boat by both ends, to make her sail sideways. Since Sitt keeps the only log aboard, he cannot

have that; and he abandons this scheme, for it is n't clear whether the log is to be tied by its two ends or to the vessel's two ends.

At length we are floating down leisurely during the late afternoon. In all the glory of the setting sun we come within sight of Kasrn Ibrīm. There is the usual tussle with the reis as to where to tie up for the night. He is for putting the boat to shore above the rocky headland, but we had selected our own little haven so long ago as when we were on the up journey, — a snug cove to the north, cut out, apparently, just to fit the Terrapin. The reis declares that no such cove exists, we declare that it does; he says we will wreck the boat, we say we will not. We carry our point, and all the men being put at the oars, we round the headland, and make our snug harbor amidst the recriminations and maledictions of the old reis. He evidently feels that in speaking a tongue unknown to us his language is not "actionable." The men all look at the Howadji and wonder how he knew this cove, — he who tells them that this is his first voyage between the cataracts. They little know that a painter's eye begets a retentive memory.

We sit up on deck after dark, wrapped in our very thickest traveling rugs, and for Christmas carols have the weird Nubian songs of the crew to the accompaniment of their thoroughly heathen tom-tom. The heavens are filled with numberless stars, but by far the brightest is one which hangs in the East, a reminder of that wondrous star of long ago.

## CHAPTER XIX

### A ROBBER STRONGHOLD

EVER since passing Ibrim on our up-Nile voyage, the Howadji has been thinking of just how to sketch this bold rock, and now that we are tied at its foot, he is up early. The sailors have had a long night's sleep after their battle with the wind, and masters and crew are all astir at sunrise. By seven o'clock baths and breakfasts are over, and the cook is off in the felucca with a couple of sailors to look for fresh eggs in the village opposite. Sitt has the reis and several more of the crew in readiness to make the ascent of the fortress rock, while the Howadji and Alli, his fly-driver, have already planted the big sketching umbrella a hundred yards up the shore, from which a sketch of our boat at the foot of the rock, with reflections and distant sky, is sure to be made interesting.

Sitt and her guard start slowly up the bold headland. The loose earth, the débris,

the pots herds, all slip from under foot, but long before the sun is high the little party climb into town through a breach in the wall, and reach the highest point after several times losing themselves in the narrow, winding streets. The breach they climb through is an old one, once repaired and reopened. Not even the ghost of an old guard checks their entrance. The hill has been cut away into many terraces, with steps leading from one to another, and each terrace is lined with dwellings cut into the rock, the sides, back wall, and floors of which are of stone, while the roofs must have been of durra stalks, thatched doubtless with palm pith and leaves. Some of these huts were evidently originally for cattle, for the troughs for water and food still remain in them.

The sailors know nothing of the place, and can tell Sitt no legends about it. Its history, as Strabo and other authorities give it, is very broken, and whole centuries are passed over without record. Its position of natural strength is so great that it is easy to imagine it as the stronghold of first one tribe, then another, of one conquering general after another, through one century, then another.

Petronius, according to Strabo, was here, and after taking it, repaired his own ravages, and placed a garrison of over four hundred men to hold it. To get to it, he must have passed over the same sand hills on which Cambyses's army was overwhelmed by a whirlwind, — what we now call, doubtless, a sand-storm. He seems to have been little daunted by its natural strength or by its garrison, for, as Strabo continues, he pushed on further south to Gebel Addeh, the royal seat of Candace, the masculine Ethiopian queen who had lost one eye, and razed this stronghold to the ground, though it had been left in charge of her own son. Napata, as her royal seat was then called, was doubtless the rock fortress of Addeh, whence we had looked almost as far up river as Wady-Halfa. Of the two fortresses, Petronius must have deemed Ibrīm the most impregnable, for he abandoned the other in its favor, and left here his four hundred tried troops with the year's provisions. Of the size of the fort we can form some idea from the fact that he sent one thousand prisoners to Cæsar after selling many others, along with booty of various kinds.

That Ibrīm was therefore in excellent con-



dition in Petronius's time, we may feel sure, from this account of Strabo's. It is often alluded to as a Saracen stronghold; and as the word Saracen is derived from saraka, to plunder, to steal, it may have been a kind of robber-sheik retreat, whence they descended upon and pillaged the country far and near. It was also in the possession of the Bosnians, or European Turks, then of the Mamelukes, who were finally driven from even this eyrie by Ibrahim, son of the great Pasha, Mohammed Ali, the founder of the present reigning Khedival house of Egypt.

There must have been through those troublous ages thousands of people — wives, children, and slaves — living along these hill-sides, who, in times of attack, would perhaps fly for refuge to the top of the hill, and into the fortress, there to aid in throwing stones and missiles upon the heads of the attacking forces. From the river side their fort was quite impregnable, and on the south side only four-footed animals could ascend, so that there were but two steep sides to be guarded.

The Howadji's sketch is postponed by the wind, or is it because of his desire to push

up into this old Ibrīm? He is determined to enter through the old sally-port, into which many great boulders have been thrown, or fallen of their own weight. How has the ornamentation on the top of the entrance of the sally-port escaped destruction? In the general ruin, how has this disk, supported by sacred asps, escaped even a scratch? The mouldings are many of them broken, the doorposts are notched and cracked, but the central decoration of the lintel — an ornament at least three feet in diameter — is perfect. The sandstone from which it is carved is soft, and the ground around is strewn with hard rocks and boulders, yet there is not a nick in this carving. The vandals of this land must surely all be dead; and excursionists have not yet begun their depredations here.

By mounting upon the piles of boulders, the Howadji and his shadow, Alli, clamber up through the small aperture, clinging to the lintel of the door as they squeeze through. Within this port are chambers, evidently prepared for the storing of the rocky boulders to be thrown on assailants below. Here is the only wood about the place, huge palm

trunks built into the walls to brace and support them, and provide a foothold for the defenders above on the battlement. These logs are so embedded that neither time nor searchers after firewood have been able to dislodge them. To remove the débris which rests on them and take them out from above would be the labor of Hercules; to remove them from below would require a Samson to hold up, rather than to tear down, the columns and great walls.

Where are the skeletons of those in armor who defended this sally-port? Do they lie buried under the débris, or are they in distant ports, the relics of those sent in chains along with thousands of prisoners to Cæsar?

We spent all the forenoon wandering through the streets, and over the broken walls of the ruined habitations. Many of these walls are of dressed sandstone, and here and there is a granite column with Coptic cross, or a carved capital. These detached capitals look like small altars. They would make picturesque supports for benches, or tubs of flowers, — if the Exploration Society would allow them to be put to any such base use.

All is now confusion ; remains of one epoch lie scattered with remains which antedate them by hundreds of years ; ghosts of Romans, Bosnians, Arabs, and Mamelukes roam about o' nights picking out broken relics of their several occupations.

The view on all sides is unsurpassed. The river lies hundreds of feet below ; across it stretches the Libyan desert back of the band of cultivation which reaches along the river-bank. Silence reigns over all. In all this ruin we see neither snake nor scorpion nor bat, nor even their dry bones. The wind has swept away every vestige of dust, and the town market-place is as clean as if swept every morning.

The sailors amuse themselves with a game played with small stones which they stand in holes cut in the top of one of the fallen capitals. We do not stop to see its outcome, for we are attracted by a number of red stone archways which show up round the corner of one of the nearer ruins, — arches made of the same red stone as the lintel of the sally-port. Many of them have been whitewashed, but the whitewash has partly worn off, giving them the appearance of great age. Here

and there upon them are rosettes carved in relief — standing out with a relief of a couple of inches.

Sitt feels that she must have one of those rosettes. There can be no harm in removing one, for Ibrīm is not on the list of the monuments of Nubia. Few visitors take the trouble to climb this rock which to us is so full of fascination. Perhaps if we carry off a rosette as a sample, it may play the same part as the Elgin marbles, and arouse new interest in the spot. How to cut it off, however, is the question. An offer of backsheesh has a great effect: instantly a sailor is off to the boat like the arrow from a bow, then straight over the rocky descent as if it were but ten paces away. He is back in an incredibly short time, with a couple of table-knives. These Howadji, of inventive genius, hacks with a piece of flint into miniature saws, good for sawing the soft sandstone. The men pile stones one upon another until they have a cairn much more convenient than any ladder. Each man takes his turn sawing; little by little the knives cut away; the soft, red sand powders the faces and heads of the blacks, and soon gives them a weird appearance.



COPTIC ROSASSE FROM KASRN IBRIM

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... ATIONS.

As the incision deepens, the men grow more and more like pink Indians ; instead of turning "a black man white," as Kipling has it, this industry turns him red. Before mid-day we have dislodged the little rosette, and have retired with our trophy from the now very hot sunlight to the cool shades of our houseboat saloon. Here, quietly reading up, we find that barbarians overwhelmed Ibrim in the third century A. D., and that in the sixth century all the barbarians were converted to Christianity, which gradually spread throughout Nubia. Our rosette bearing the Coptic cross and several mystic initials belongs to this date.

The little cook was not in the backsheesh deal, being absent when the offer was made to the men, and he seems to want to distinguish himself in some way. So before we descend from the height, he beckons us to follow him over rocks and stones, up old stairs and down others, until he stands over a wide opening, and down this he points. It is a hole about twenty feet deep, and on shading one's eyes not only bones but skeletons and parts of skulls can be seen. The little cook climbs into the aperture and avows that there are



bones as far as he can see in covered ditches extending from it. He urges us to come down to assure ourselves of this. But we have had enough experience for one morning, and in spite of the assistance proffered by the crew, we are obliged to disappoint little kuz ; but nevertheless he comes in for a modicum of the backsheesh.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE ROAD TO THE GOLD MINES

WE untie in the early afternoon, hoping to float down a few miles before dark ; but the wind stiffens instead of dropping, and we merely drift to the other side of the river, where we again tie up. There is no use trying to go farther in the teeth of such wind ; if it blows for a week, for a week we must remain tied to the bank. Above us is a neat, tidy village, where we see many women but no men. The women are good-looking, and well made. Among them we notice one who is really beautiful, — not so dark as the others, with oval face, brilliant, well-cut eyes, the whites of them as white as her teeth, which are like a row of pearls, and a long, straight nose. On her forehead she wears a beaten gold pendant, and around her neck a bead necklace, from which depend a dozen or more thin gold coins ; in her nose she has no ring. She wears a long outer garment which

trails behind her, and her carriage is that of a queen. She is like one of those wall decorations in the great temple of Abou Simbel, more beautiful than almost any other in Egypt. She is conscious of her beauty, this child of the desert, and will not allow us to approach too near her, but smiles at us over the shoulders of her companions. She is certainly neither a Nubian, nor a Soudanese; whence has she inherited such grace, such coquettish little ways? We ask Alli to find out how old she is; but he only replies, "She not know how old she is," which brings to our recollection the fact that these people never know their ages. Soudanese children found on the fields of battle, or after the fights, and taken into English families to be trained, have birthdays assigned to them, which their masters note like those of other children in the house. A physician pronounces when a youth reaches the proper age to be drafted into the army. He is then, in the eyes of the law, eighteen years old, and has reached man's estate.

We notice that the girls of apparently about twelve in this village — which appears to be inhabited by females only — have their

noses freshly pierced; they are awaiting, each of them, the choice of a husband who will put, in place of the wisp of straw they now wear, a silver or brass ring. Sitt fancies that these rings are to resign them, when once married, to being led about by the nose.

Strabo cites that the women of this region wear rings in the upper lip, but the fact is that the ring worn in the nose is of such size that it hangs far down upon the upper lip.

It is pathetic how soon the youth of these women is gone, how soon they are carrying one tiny child tucked away under the arm, or sitting on the left shoulder, with several others hanging on to their long robes. All the native women wear veils or gowns trailing behind them for two reasons, — to destroy their footprints, lest some one should fall in love with the impressions of their feet, which are remarkably small; and to prevent evil spirits from tracking them to their homes. They often have their shoulders and breasts fully exposed, but continue to wear garments trailing in the sand.

We are told some story about these women being the wives of men who are work-

ing way down in Cairo, who keep them well supplied with this world's goods. Indeed, there appears to be no necessity for their working for themselves. Even their fingernails and toe-nails are well trimmed and dyed with henna, and the only point of neglect seems to be, as usual, the children's eyes.

In one or two of the villages we have noticed a primitive effort at decoration in the display of white china plates stuck on the mud-house fronts ; but within the huts none of the comforts of chair or bed. The beauty whom we have seen to-day interests us more than all else here, and we regret that we shall float away when the wind dies down and never know aught of what she is or what becomes of her.

The crew all seem as interested as we in this Amazon settlement ; they chaff and giggle with one another, and show signs of Nubian flirtations ; so wind or no wind, we must move off half a mile more to keep them from the snares of these modern sirens.

Sitt is beginning to learn something practical about sailing a dahabéah. It has been observed that when going upstream, if the boat runs on a sand-bar, the down current

aids greatly in floating it again, but when heading downstream, if we run aground the river does its utmost to complicate the situation by quickly washing around us a lot of mud, which thickens and deepens faster than one would think possible, and greatly decreases the chances of easy escape. If the houseboat goes on a mud-bar sidewise, we may be held all winter. Therefore every effort is made by reis and crew to keep her from going broadside on.

The Terrapin has in the last two days more than justified her name; at the best she has but crawled along. Occasionally she has stopped to back on the sand-bar; and now she lies alongshore, blown here by a hurricane, — not wrecked like the two ghiashas that Reis Mohammed loves to tell us of, but simply blown against the soft mud-bank. Were there rocks here, we should soon have a hole stove in our bottom. But sometimes for miles along this Nile there appears scarcely a jagged rock ledge, such is the quantity of deposit continually brought down by the water. It is like putting down straw for the dahabéahs and ghiashas to rest on.

Reis has his story of the two wrecked

ghiashas in readiness as a warning whenever we wish him to sail after dark ; and since sundown in this month of December is at 5 P. M., the temptation to sail on is great indeed.

The Howadji and Sitt walk the upper deck by turns on the lookout for the first sign that the wind is abating ; at length, by two in the afternoon, having seen no sign, they both lose patience and summon the crew from their eternal siesta. To the oars ! And in spite of wind and unwilling helpers we make four miles before dark. We are again in that unlucky stretch between Derr and Korosko, — the ten-mile stretch which took us all of three days to make in going up, — and are for pushing on after dark, but the timid reis is for tying up to the bank ; and so, since we had carried our point and made that four miles, we decide that it is best to humor the old fellow. By seven in the evening he and all the crew are wrapped in their poor little thin blankets, and as we observe them we feel, as we have felt before, that it is our duty to hire a large ghiasha and stock it with blankets, one for every man who sails on the Nile. But our efforts might be in



ROWING DOWN STREAM



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vain, — like those of a club of benevolent ladies in St. Augustine, Florida, one season, who met each day to work for the Indians on the reserve. Those Indians were without shirts ; so these benevolent ladies stitched and hemmed, hemmed and stitched, till they had no fewer than twelve dozen white shirts to distribute. These were duly apportioned among the bucks, who, apparently at a loss to know the proper use of cotton shirts, staked them in their daily games of cards, until before many weeks one Indian held the entire twelve dozen.

Joking aside, it is surprising how scant the clothing of peasants and sailors is, and how little they appear to suffer, while Europeans shiver in good merino underwear and Scotch wool clothing. Sitt has heard but one of the crew sneeze in six weeks, while we have often felt as wheezy as in a London fog. None of these sailors have colds, though Alli from Cairo may be said to have the grippe, but the Howadji is curing him with vigorous applications of mustard plasters and hot whiskey. These remedies are both new to Alli, who remarks : “ Both alike — outside ; inside — like fire, never you mind.”

Howadji and Sitt take regular watches on deck ; when either one paces up and down like a veritable sentry, a few miles is accomplished with difficulty ; as soon as both disappear, the crew give themselves over to napping. With the exercising of great energy we have some days floated and rowed as much as ten miles.

Here we are on a sand-bank again ! First the bow slips on as gently as you will, and the helmsman, in a wild effort to swing her off, ports his helm with a vengeance, and instead of our making one of those dervish-like whirls with the stern, to drag the bow after it, we go side and stern both on, while the bow plants itself deeper and deeper. The houseboat seems to be trying to turn from a Terrapin to a mud turtle. Everything in the cabin is upset ; a pretty howdy-do !

Only when the Terrapin is high and fast on a bar do we realize the utter ignorance of these sailors of all modern methods of applying force. Brute force is their only idea ; they appear to understand nothing about pulleys or levers. There is not the smallest windlass on board, and to pull the boat off this special bar they are for tying ropes to the rudder-

post, which will come out of her sooner than she will come out of the mud. We do not yet know why our bow is piled high with stones, unless it be to make it stick rather than the rudder, or perhaps to lift the rudder higher in the water. We float down, generally, stern foremost; if we come into a shallow, the rudder slips over, and we never know of the bar until the whole length of our Terrapin lies flat in the mud. The sailors' favorite method of working off a bar is to get into the water up to their arm-pits, put their backs against the boat, and push and yell for an indefinite time, and sometimes send for a neighboring sheik to bring his people, who then lift one, lift all, with shrieks and imprecations from the fellaheen. As yet we have not sent for any sheiks, but may before we are out of the woods — that is, the mud. Our men are able to sing and work and work and sing, — twice the allowance of singing to the measure of work. When at their oars, they give three distinct pulls for one stroke, then before taking another stroke there is a season of shouting twice as long as that of pulling. By the time the boat has lost all its headway, they pull again. When we stop

but for five minutes to mail a letter, it means utter demoralization of the sailing for several hours.

Thus we come to Korosko, the scene of our mutiny. When we were last here, we were told a wonderful tale of a road, — not the caravan route, which is much shorter than the circuitous river route for Khartoum, but a road which disappears into the Arabian desert, goes no one can tell where, but which, legend says, leads to a rich and fertile country, well watered and well peopled, and where, moreover, the inhabitants pay no taxes.

We listen to these tales and believe this old route may not be a fabulous one, but one which led to the forgotten gold mines of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemys ; a track of such interest that a quotation from the " Egyptian Gazette " of this year may awake renewed interest, for the wealth of old Egypt was too vast to be the outcome only of agricultural schemes.

"The outward and visible signs of the wealth which poured into ancient Egypt from these mines still exist in Nubia. The many tourists who extend their Nile trip to the Second Cataract are amazed at the enormous quantity of ruins that line the banks of the river

from Assouan to Wady-Halfa. In Upper Egypt there is nearly always a comparatively broad strip of cultivable land, whose extraordinary fertility could have supported a population sufficiently numerous to people the cities and fill the temples. Above the First Cataract the aspect of the country changes. The natives eke out a miserable sustenance from the niggard earth. The little piece of green between river and desert often dies away altogether, and could no more have supported a large number of inhabitants in the days of Rameses the Great than it can now. Yet the masses of ruins show that Nubia was once a thriving and populous land, and the greatest of Egypt's old rulers made it the site of one of the most stupendous architectural effects that the Pharaohs have bequeathed to us. The former prosperity of Nubia was solely due to the mines in the eastern desert. Although their situation was much nearer the coast than the Nile, the trade route between them and Egypt lay through the desert to the river, as in those early ages the navigation of the Red Sea had not been yet attempted by the Egyptians. The Nubian valley was entirely dependent on this lucrative carrying trade, and when the sea route was discovered, it at once lapsed into the state which it now presents.

“These mines were worked from the very dawn of history. There is evidence of the existence of an aboriginal race of negro miners, who extracted the precious ore even before the Egyptian appeared. The Pharaohs were ever keen in exploiting the mineral wealth of their realms, and as early as the end of the Third Dynasty, the mines in the Sinaitic Peninsula were worked. There is no proof that the mines on the

Red Sea coast were known to the Egyptians until the Fifth Dynasty, about 2500 B. C., but from that date they were worked incessantly for almost three thousand years! We know that in the reign of Thothmosis III. the yearly output was equivalent to £137,000, according to Dr. Wallis Budge's interpretation of the hieroglyphics. This is a far more likely figure than the £70,000,000, which Sharpe, with all due reserve, states was annually obtained from the Nubian gold mines. We can still see Pharaoh offering the gold to Amun-Ra on the walls of the Memnonium, and the hieroglyphics on a little rock-built temple near the mines say that Sethos, the father of Rameses the Great, discovered mines with the 'alertness of an eagle's eye.' Throughout the long ages of ancient Egyptian history there are abundant proofs that the mines were worked continuously, and during the Ptolemaic age the yield was almost as large as in earlier times. Berenice was founded by Ptolemy Philadelphus, and its advantageous situation as the port for the transport of the gold to the Isthmus greatly facilitated the export of the mines' riches to Alexandria. Although the strength of the country was sapped and its trade was fast decaying during the close of the Ptolemaic epoch, work at the mines was never relaxed, and it was only this gold that preserved the decrepit dynasty for so long from the inevitable collapse.

"We find descriptions of the mines and of the system of mining there in various ancient authors, such as Photius and Diodorus Siculus, and the latter has preserved a detailed description of the mines from a lost work by the geographer Agatharcides. The piteous accounts they give of the miner's lot bear a curious re-

semblance to the stories that used to be current about the sufferings of the Russian exiles in Siberia. The language these writers use is all the more noticeable, as sympathy had not become a fashionable sentiment two thousand years ago. The passage wherein Agatharcides contrasts the lives of the wretched half-naked women and children who extracted the precious metal with the luxurious existence of the royal sybarites, decked with the products of the former's toil, has a curiously modern philanthropic ring about it, and is an interesting *locus classicus* for the transition from the pagan to the Christian standpoint. The slaves worked under the lash. Men, women, and children were chained together in gangs and guarded by soldiers, specially selected from those troops who were ignorant of the language spoken by the miners. The stone huts of these unfortunate people still exist. In one mining centre every ravine is filled with hundreds of these little dwellings, which have sheltered generations of hopeless toilers. The details of the gold mining process employed are given by Agatharcides, who was perhaps an eye-witness of the scenes and sufferings he describes.

“The last vestiges of the ancient miners before Islam overspread Egypt are the ruins of a little church in Wady Sikait. This interesting relic of the Christian miners of the fourth century was discovered by Mr. Floyer. The apse, the niches in the walls, the shape of the windows, and the absence of a portico clearly mark it as a Christian place of worship, and these architectural features are the more noticeable by comparison with the ruins of three Græco-Roman temples in the same valley. In the fifth century the mines



were deserted. The philosopher Olympiodorus solaced himself for the rebuff that he had met with in his efforts to found a Peripatetic School at Alexandria by traveling in out-of-the-way parts of Egypt. After visiting some of the oases in the Libyan desert, he was very eager to see the ancient mines on the Red Sea coast, but was obliged to give up the attempt owing to the difficulties of the journey. If there had been any means of communication by land or sea between the mines and Egypt in that age (circa 450 A. D.), the journey would have been a very simple matter, but in the general collapse of the forces of civilization the mines were perforce neglected. They could only be worked by the State. A large garrison was always needed to guard against the incursions of the wandering Arabs and to overawe the enslaved miners. As the central authority became more and more relaxed, men could no longer be spared for the outskirts of the Empire, so for four hundred years the very existence of these once famous gold fields was lost to the world. Then for a brief season they became the theatre of one of the most extraordinary epochs of butchery and crime ever known to history, only to fade again into the limbo of romance for another thousand years.

“The story of the life and adventures of Abderrahman el-Omary is given in Quatremère’s translations from Arabic historians. It is so thronged with incident that only the briefest outline is possible. He was born in the early part of the ninth century. His ancestry was among the most illustrious in Islam, for his great-great-grandfather was the Caliph Omar. After the best education that a Moslem of that age could obtain at Mecca and Kairwan, he went to Cairo, and

it was here that he heard the tales of the wonderful mines that were lying neglected in the solitudes of the Arabian desert. The wild Arabs of the wilderness still came upon casual mementoes of the former wealth of this deserted 'El Dorado,' and probably Omary's greed was aroused by some stray specimens that had found their way down the Nile. Toulon, whose mosque is well known to every visitor to Cairo, then ruled Egypt for the Sultans of Bagdad, and Omary had to use great circumspection in order to avoid exciting his suspicion. He secretly fitted up a filibustering expedition, and gave out that he intended to conduct trading operations on a large scale in Upper Egypt and Nubia. At that time Assouan was the southern frontier of Islam, for Christianity had not been utterly swept from the Upper Nile. Three little Christian kingdoms lay between the First Cataract and the junction of the White and Blue Niles. The southernmost of these remnants of African Christianity had its capital on the site of the modern Khartoum.

"Omary's seizure of the mines, and his endeavors to open a line of communication with the river, brought him into continual conflict with these powers, and his subsequent career is one long tale of prosperous mining and ruthless slaughter. The history of his series of wars with Zacharias, King of Makorra, the modern Dongola, and his successor, Kirky, shows that these Ethiopian Christians were not a whit inferior to their Moslem foe in cruelty and double-dealing. Although Omary had only one short spell of peace, he never let go his hold on the gold fields. Mine after mine was reopened, and so numerous were his slaves that sixty thousand camels were employed in conveying provisions

from Assouan to the mining district. Even this regular supply did not suffice, and huge quantities of corn had to be exported from Egypt by sea. Toulon, who had now become the first independent Mohammedan sovereign of Egypt, grew alarmed at the serious drain that this entailed on the corn supply of his subjects. He put a veto on the export, but it was soon removed when he learned that it would necessitate a war with the one hundred thousand picked warriors of this Gold King of the East. Omary was killed in the height of his power while avenging his brother's murder. On his death the sources of his enormous wealth were again forgotten, and from that day to this the gold mines have been left unheeded and forlorn. The life of their latest exploiter is well worth reading in Quatremère's pages, for in the whole history of the race for wealth the character of this little known millionaire stands forth supreme in its utter ruthlessness. The glimpses, too, that we obtain of the far-off Christian kingdoms of the Soudan are very curious. But throughout this neglected page of history the carnage is so excessive, and the object so sordid, that the reader's interest in the story gives way to a feeling of extreme weariness. The obvious reflection of Omary's success is that if he could obtain such wealth from the mines that he was able to overawe the ruler of Egypt, and to rise to almost sovereign power, who knows what resources these gold fields still contain, for they have never been worked since his death?"

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE LIONS OF SABUAH

THE *bête noir* of the Terrapin has been the old man with the mended leg, or rather the man whose leg was never mended ; he is so black that we have nicknamed him Azib (the widower). Alli has made the discovery that all the crew belong to the same family, are indeed near relatives of the reis. Old Azib is the uncle of Awasa, little kuz is Reis Mohammed's son, Dahab is his nephew, and another is his sister's son. And the real reason why we have not the allotted number of men in the crew must be that the reis's relatives gave out. If, like Rameses, old Reis Mohammed had had one hundred and eleven sons and sixty-seven daughters, perhaps he would have left old "game leg" at home to look after the cat which was put on shore after the first night out, all through which she mourned either for her relatives which are no more, or relatives still to come.

Old Azib is always in trouble; the wind is always in the east for the old fellow. Again to-day we have a scene because of his age and disability. Age in these old countries is always revered, and it is only when Americans appear that there is any question of hurrying the aged natives. Because he is old and feeble, Azib is counted as the port stroke, for as our men sit in two even rows, we have two stroke oars instead of one. So you may guess how much trouble we have.

Behind old Azib sits a strong young Nubian, who is forever digging him in the back because he either cannot or will not recover quickly enough. "And this is how the row began." The first we know of it is a free fight going on amid the shrieks of the reis, who, making matters worse, rushes from the tiller and belabors the combatants.

"Will you let the boat be wrecked?" he shouts over and over again, and with reason, for we are in a swift current which is carrying us on to a very visible bank.

Sitt seizes the tiller and swings on it as best she can, while Howadji grabs Reis Mohammed, orders him back to the helm, and then puts in a few blows himself; but he

finds such resistant muscle and flesh that he feels as if he were pommeling a deal door.

The men howl and call at one another like shouting dervishes, while Alli sticks close to his master to ward off any stray blow, repeating in his ear the while, "Never you mind, never you mind." But the Howadji is not likely to get hit unless by a badly aimed blow intended for some one else, for no matter what may be the stress of circumstances, a black never hits a white man.

At length things quiet down, and we conclude that that idea of chaining the rowers to the benches was not half bad.

Now the *bête noir* was entirely at fault, but the young sailor who began the fight appears very contrite as the day goes on. He brings Sitt some sprays of blossoms in the afternoon, and, finding that she is pleased, goes for more, which he plants in an old rusty kerosene can with a lot of Nile mud, and brings to the upper deck. It is a very small spray, and the can which holds it is unlovely, but Sitt has not the heart to order it down; so there it stays day after day, the can leaking a little on the deck, drying up in the sun. When the heart is right, how can

one question the outward show and appearance? — as in the case of an old Virginia darkey, who, though mourning her dead daughter, wore the brightest of dresses, and when asked by Sitt, — “Mammy, are n’t you going to put on black for your daughter?” — replied, “No, honey; no, honey; but the Lord himself knows how black my heart is.”

We slip our mooring just as the day is breaking, for we must make our distance before the wind rises; and the wind, when it does n’t blow all the time, never forgets to rise at 10 A. M.

At 4 A. M. the Southern Cross is brilliant, and as we gaze upon it we begin to understand why its praises have been so sounded and sung. Lest you may think that 4 A. M. is a favorite time of rising with the master of the Terrapin, it may be well to note how easy it is, when stretched beside a cabin window, to take a look out for steamboats and constellations, without rising. It is not only a diversion, but, cut off as we are from subjects of worldly interest, it has become really exciting.

By nine this morning Sitt is booted and spurred — that is, in pith hat and short

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LIONS OF SABUAH



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skirt — to mount the bank to the ruins of Sabuah (the lions).

The position of the temple in a sand plain appeals to us ; the lions couchant with their human heads, of which, to be sure, but two or three can be seen above the sand, somehow accentuate the surrounding desolation and loneliness, which is appalling. The hieroglyphics, like many on the other temples (for which Sitt refers all who are interested to Dr. Budge's guide), tell of valiant deeds and marvelous conquests and acquisition of territory by the great Rameses. They tell, too, of pillars of the temple decorated with costly stones and gems. So fairy-like is the account that Sitt finds herself looking down into the sand, as she walks or wades through it, wondering if all the jewels of which it tells have been already found and carried off, or if some still remain as proof to the incredulous that the story was not written by Grimm or Hans Andersen.

Though we find no jewels here, we have seen some beautiful pebbles on certain mid-stream banks along which we have passed. So polished are some from rolling over and over for hundreds of years that they might

be strung as a necklace, had nature bored as well as polished them.

Although we cannot see much of these Sabuah ruins, for the sand has reburied them, what is visible grows upon us through every moment of examination.

That the inscriptions on certain ruins are so much more satisfactory than on others is due to perfection in cutting and the quality of the sandstone. Much of this stone is as soft in many places as cheese, and can even be scraped away with a finger-nail. Five thousand years makes a difference even in a piece of stone. As the builders of the new barrage at Assouan aver, universally good stone is not to be found even in the cataract, and Assouan, which furnished that pink granite for so many years, is jealous of having the remainder carried away; so she now hides her good under much that is inferior and worthless, and sends the engineers far afield before giving up her best.

In one of the chambers of this temple of Sabuah the figures of certain gods can still be traced, though the figure of Saint Peter, with key in hand, has been painted over them. This figure cannot have been exe-

cuted by a native artist, for the key in the Saint's hand is copied after keys of foreign make, and not after the strange, square keys of ancient Egyptian days ; nor is it like the stick, with hard wood points or cross-ties, used by many a native. But the decorations may perhaps be better studied in a guide-book than under the sand which covers them.

Can desolation so great and ruin so complete ever overtake the great cathedrals which grace our northern homes, and which are such objects of care and veneration ? we wonder. The thought is a sad one. Yet why not ? Things crumble in the cold stone belts of northern Europe and America five hundred times faster than in this dry air of Nubia.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE HOWADJI'S BAD HABIT

WHILE we have been examining the temple of the lions, the villagers from hard by have gathered about us, and as the Howadji makes a sketch we receive more attention than the natives heretofore have given us. They have become less and less shy as the sketch has progressed, and when it is completed they accompany us back to the boat, while Alli, who constitutes himself a rear guard, walks between them and us.

The Howadji has dropped into a bad habit in giving backsheesh to a pretty little naked boy. The penny has gone into the slot, the backsheesh machine has started up, and from now on naked boys, fringy girls, and a blind man follow us not only to the water's edge, but, as we gain our landing planks, wade into the water in our wake. Howadji throws the blind man a coin, which is caught by some kind of coast-guard with an old gun on

his shoulder, who pockets it, and refuses to give it up, until he sees Howadji emerge from the saloon door armed with our shot-gun. Then he quickly hands it over, even before the gun can be leveled at him. Then the Howadji throws open the gun, showing the fellow that it is not loaded, and the laugh from the gathered villagers is at his expense.

Sitt finds some small coins in the depths of one of her pockets, and throws them for the small boys to scramble for. They fairly dredge the river, bringing up handfuls of the soft mud, and the thought strikes us that they might be useful to us in digging out the Terrapin the next time she slips on a sand-bar. But to take along a lot of small boys for such an emergency would be impossible, unless we put them in the felucca, as is often done with sheep and lambs, and drag them along behind the houseboat. We could throw them food at stated intervals, which is more than they may get if they remain here. Perhaps, however, Alli can manage to find us some boys farther down the river if we should need them, and we dismiss the thought.

The marvelous color has tempted the How-

adji to go to work making color notes, while Sitt makes notes with pen and ink. The lights and shadows, the colors and outlines, are a constant source of enjoyment. Each moment they change, and as we turn round and round, even the quickest impression sketch is difficult to accomplish. One might as well try to study astronomy seated on a horse of a merry-go-round. Round and round we go, fully justifying all that our friends had told us of this sort of sailing, but which we so little appreciated until we had experienced it. Not only is the Howadji hampered in making the simplest sketch, but the sailor who prays so often must be equally disturbed. They both begin well, but Howadji soon finds the landscape he is painting behind him; while Awassa's prayer, begun to the east, continues toward all the other points of the compass. Round and round our dervish dance continues; if we leave any track, it will resemble a huge scroll. But with each turn we gain our own length and more, and so as long as the wind holds off we shall steadily decrease the distance of eighty odd miles between us and Philæ.

By nine in the evening the eighty miles

have been reduced to sixty, and we are surprised that we have not yet tied up for the night. We do not understand this sudden willingness to go on until Ali informs us that the crew of an upgoing ghiasha has told old Reis Mohammed that his home in Shellal has been expropriated by the government. He is fully convinced that he will reach Shellal to find the house razed to the ground and his family removed to other quarters, and he mutters to himself as he holds the tiller that he cannot get home in time to secure his indemnity. We try to comfort him with the assurance that governments move slowly, and that, though agents may have measured off the property and visited the house with a view of condemning it, it will be months before any action is taken or indemnity paid. But the blacks are always like children, and the old reis, heedless of our explanations, sits huddled up, perched on one corner of the deck among ropes and cordage, a forlorn and pathetic figure.

The men have been at the oars since dawn, and while they have had extra meals and "smokes" at odd hours, they have worked bravely ; and they are still singing and



shouting long after their usual bedtime. There has been no glance towards shore until now, at ten o'clock, when at last they begin to look for a place into which the Terrapin can slip for the night. Then soon their side awnings will be tied down, and they should be fast asleep and rid of care until the dawn of another day.

This evening, however, proves an exception to the rule, for instead of a lonely spot on the river, the reis finds one which is evidently the accustomed stopping-place of the ghiashas on their way upstream, and within a few moments of our arrival a lot of them also draw up, and the reis gets all the latest news from Shellal.

We have been passing numbers of craft heavily freighted all this week, for the regular winter winds seem to have set in. Many of these craft are not the old-fashioned wooden boats, but are flat-bottomed iron hulls, with high bows like the old models. They are laden to the water's edge, and mud is often piled on to heighten the bulwarks, for the spread of canvas they carry drives them rapidly through the water. Such a spread of canvas would be impossible where

winds were squally, especially since certain sails have bands or flanges of sail-cloth sewn along the seams of the mainsail. The ghishas can be said to come along "with a big bone in their teeth;" and they almost always appear in squads, like flocks of wild geese. The Egyptian wind is satisfactory in its way, for it is so avowedly for or against one, and it stops for no parleying.

There are more rows along the banks on Fridays than on other days of the week. Friday is the Mohammedan holy day, but the controversies do not appear to be over religious matters. The quarrelsome season of Ramadán has not yet begun, but we have witnessed three noisy fights along the banks in the last twenty-four hours. Of a fight which is still going on we can understand clearly that the cause is the conduct of a native woman in allowing her goats to feast upon a large patch of beautiful freshly ripened clover which belongs to another woman; for we heard the defrauded owner's voice echoing from hill to hill as she ran to bring first one neighbor then another. Then we saw her run along the bank to a stretch where a dozen and more native men

were working together, and taking one by his arm, drag him alongshore to see the ruin which has been wrought, for the goats have made good use of their time and have *effleuré* the patch, nibbling off the tenderest and most delicate leaves. Then the poor creature squatted upon the ground, and picking up handfuls of dust began the fight by throwing it at the other woman, while all the village gathered to look on. We are tempted to stop and tell the good woman that she will make herself ill as well as lose her clover crop, if she continues to shriek, and scream, and groan, and fly about; but we keep on our way, and as we float beyond sound of her shrieking voice, we can still discern her wild gesticulations.

Last night it was the hyenas which had a fight on the bank. We heard the distinct cry of one and different notes of many, sounding like the calls of various kinds of animals. This morning we learn — of course from Alli, in his usual strange mixture of Arabic and English — that the queer shrill notes came from the “little brothers and sisters;” in other words, a family of hyena pups. When their noise was at its loudest

during the night, the Howadji had got up to fire off a gun in the hope of quieting them ; but this was not necessary, for in his annoyance at all the racket he closed his window with a bang, which had all the effect of a gunshot: the cries were instantly stilled. The natives are forced every night or two to fire a blank cartridge to keep off these corpse eaters, who would otherwise encroach within the village precincts. It is also said that the village dogs, which are noisy and bark one, bark all, so long as one hyena's call is heard, become silent, every one of them, when a pack of these animals advance: this is an occasion when the dogs deem silence to be golden.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### “WARRIORS WITH BREASTPLATES OF FIRE”

HAD there been a weather bureau on this stretch of the Nile, the clerk would certainly have reported for to-day, “Atmospheric conditions disturbed; falling weather may be expected.” Had Sitt been that clerk, she might even have gone so far as to predict snow, for the sun is obscured under just the clouds which in other countries indicate heavy and fast approaching snowstorms.

The day continues overcast, and since there is no wind, we float north with great success between ranges of hills and avalanches of golden sand which will now forever remind us of Abou Simbel. We give ourselves over part of the time to sketching and doctoring servants and crew. Sitt has had regular “office practice” for the last few days, with first one and then another of the crew coming for regular treatment of some kind. These blacks are of such a jealous

disposition that if one of them has a real complaint, several others will appear with wholly imaginary complaints — none the less real for the moment, however.

To our European ears the Arabic words for "donkey" and "cook" sound quite alike. Sitt is told that there is a difference, but she can detect none. Certainly the terms should be interchangeable where our cook is concerned. Though he is quite the most elegant-looking person on the boat, he is always in trouble. Each time he opens a can of game or vegetables he cuts his hand before he finishes with that tin. First one finger, then another, has been dressed with Pond's Extract, arnica, or salve. It is in fact the vogue on board to have ailments of one kind and another. Mustard plasters have been dealt around like playing-cards, and linen rags for poultices. Flaxseed has been forgotten, and the other classic poultice of bread and milk lacks strength where horny hands are to be treated, so we use soap. It is difficult to tell what color this black flesh should be after applications of poultices, difficult to tell proud flesh from good flesh. Howadji's stock of paint rags is heavily taxed for bands for the wounded.

Office hours for surgical treatment are directly after breakfast. Later on to-day we watch the clouds and wait for the mail-boat, which we announce to Reis Mohammed will be along by 6 p. m. He looks incredulous, and when exactly at 5.45 we point out to him the wabur (steamboat) in the distance, he declines to admit that she is a bosta until she warns us by a shrill whistle that she has something aboard for us. Only then is he willing to send the felucca to board her. Had he realized how carefully we had counted the hours since she left Shellal with our mail and bread, he would have realized that we could not be mistaken.

During the afternoon we had been nearing the pylon of the temple of Dakkeh; from our point of view the hills appear to be violet wings attached to its yellow body,—the pylon,—but our progress is so slow that it is dark before we tie up at the foot of the village of Dakkeh. Here we are overtaken by an excellent imitation of a snowstorm in the form of tiny white dragonflies, with long antennæ, and oblong, gauzy, white wings. They fly by hundreds against the cabin windows with the sound of tiny hailstones.

They drive against the glass like particles of snow, and thousands and millions are next morning brushed up on the deck and in the crevices of windows and doors. The servant who is washing the dinner dishes by lamp-light on the deck has his lamp quite obscured and his water thick with these gauzy-winged insects. Our saloon door was shut when the onset began, or we should have been blinded by them. They do not in the least resemble moths, for there is no down on their bodies, and their wings are like skeleton leaves. Attracted by the lights aboard, they had met their doom; or perhaps they were destined to live but the one day, for among the heaps that were brushed together the next morning, not one was alive. Nor did one differ from another; all seemed alike.

The sunset has been such a stunning one that even the top-heavy *bosta* looked picturesque as she came along. The clouds which had hung about all day are now turned to rose and violet, the hills are rosy, then golden, then everything in a few moments is violet gray. The clouds are like oncoming ranks of soldiers, marching along roads and valleys of rose-colored earth.



Such a brilliant array makes Sitt think of the army in the Revelation, which numbered two hundred thousand thousand horses ridden by warriors with breastplates of fire, of jacinth and brimstone, and out of whose mouth issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

To Howadji it recalled a rhyme of childhood : —

“ I see them on their winding way;  
Among the ranks the moonbeams play;  
Their lofty deeds and bearing high  
Blend with the note of victory.”

It is not often given even to the Nile traveler to behold such glory, nor can we soon forget it.

Sitt is so glad that old black Azib (the widower) is to have a new gown, even if it is but a gown belonging to one of the other men cut over. His clothes have been getting more and more scanty during the last few days, the rents and holes bigger and bigger, until we fear that he will —

“ burst this outer coat of sin,  
And hatch himself a cherubim.”

We look down from our stern sheets with deep interest upon the sailor who is fitting the gown while another pins it up on the

shoulders, and cutting it around the hem — with the Howadji’s nail scissors, by the way. We feel deeply interested in all that goes on on that lower deck, and perhaps specially in this gown, for it is presumably the outcome of our refusal to take old Azib in the felucca with us yesterday because his clothes were hanging upon him in such a haphazard fashion. Apparently in order to avoid being hatched a cherubim, and in order to go with us in the felucca the next time, old Azib has struck a bargain with one of his opulent relatives, and our *bête noir* will arrive in Philæ as well clad as the rest of the crew — but that is not saying much.

Our stop at Dakkeh will be but long enough for the crew to get their night’s sleep, and if possible, for the donkey to find some eggs in the village. Sitt remembers that when in Assouan she told the Levantine trader from whom she ordered coal, kerosene, and potatoes that she would replenish certain stores in Kalabshy and Korosko, he smiled in a way which struck her as rather sarcastic; and she has since recalled that smile more and more vividly each time that anything has been needed. She who knew the Nile only up to

the First Cataract could little understand that places with such high-sounding names as Kalabshy and Korosko, which, too, look so important on the map, should be quite so empty of stores and of supplies to meet European needs or wants.

We are searching all along here not only for eggs, but for an island of which Strabo writes, — “where there are not many crocodiles on account of the current;” to which that one-eyed Ethiope queen, Candace, escaped when attacked by Petronius. But the crocodiles, the queen, and the island have all disappeared. Things have a weird way of disappearing after two thousand years. Of the thirty thousand men who were forced by Petronius to flee to Dakkeh, there are but a few villagers left to tell the tale, and Sitt doubts if any of them know anything about it. Perhaps it was their thirty thousand ghosts who hovered in the sky over the old battle-ground at sunset yesterday evening.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE SECRET OF THE SPHINX

IN the bundle of mail received last night by the post-boat is a letter for the Howadji from his friend Stephens, who writes, —

“Do you remember we have not met since our visit to the Sphinx that moonlight night last winter? I do not write only to remind you of that night” . . .

But here the Howadji stops reading to tell Sitt of what had happened as he sat on the sand, wrapped in his plaid, before the Sphinx one morning, waiting for the sun to rise. His handsome white donkey, unsaddled and hobbled, was breakfasting on a bundle of Egyptian clover, and Alli, who had risen so long before the sun that he was not interested in its rising, lay fast asleep while the donkey ate contentedly on.

Sitt sees that the story is to be a long one, but in Nubia there is always time even for long stories; so she gets her lacework,

and as the needle flies, the Howadji goes on : —

“The morning was chill and wonderfully still, no cry but the sound of a distant hawk as it circled round in the cloudless sky, with spread wings like a ceiling decoration in an ancient tomb. The head of the colossal figure was fifty feet above me ; it stared steadily on with battered eyes toward the east, its shapely lips tightly pressed as if to guard a secret, its secret which the stele between the great paws does not reveal. Ages have defaced the form of this mysterious stone image, man has mutilated its features, but without its beard and crown it is still the colossal god of the morning, a colossal wonder which no one has yet comprehended or explained. It was just at sunrise, the horizon was hidden from the point where I crouched down before the Sphinx, but I could see the light of the sun as it gilded the summit of the great Pryamid and crept down from stone to stone, until suddenly it flashed upon the head of the Sphinx, and changed it from reddish gray to pure gold. The head was outlined against a sky of blue enamel.

“ You remember that the Sphinx stands

in a hollow-like bowl. Well, the sun was hardly up when a young girl scarce more than a child came running along at the top of the decline, running in a strangely graceful manner, her head up, throwing her feet forward like a high-stepping horse, and holding her single garment well up to the knees. She shied like a startled faun when she saw those who had arrived before her, but quickly comprehending that they were only a traveler and his attendant, she ignored them, continued her tour of inspection round the Sphinx, and disappeared over the crest of the excavation. Her footstep was not so light but that it awakened Alli, who saw at once that the Howadji, like himself, was puzzled to know what the child came for. She asked no backsheesh, but came and went without speaking. Alli knows Cairo ways, but he does not know the mysteries of the desert.

“‘Here she comes back again,’ whispered Alli, ‘coming with woman.’”

“The child advanced down the bank leading by the hand a beautiful woman with many gold ornaments about her head, arms, and ankles, though her small, well-formed feet were bare.”

“How did you know she was beautiful,” interrupts Sitt, who displays keener interest at this point of the narrative — the introduction of a beautiful woman.

“Because she let her veil drop aside just as she passed me, to let me see how beautiful she was, and I had ample time to see her before she managed to re-cover her face. She knew she was beautiful, and told me so with her long, dark eyes.”

“And why did you never mention this beauty to me before?”

“And why do you interrupt the story?” Howadji retorts.

“Forgive me, forgive me, I am only chaffing you; do go on.”

“The dark beauty went quickly round the Sphinx, touched it, and climbed the bank past me again, all the while holding the child’s hand in hers. Alli still had no idea why they had come, but said they had come a long way, for the woman had a donkey, and there was a man waiting for her down in the valley by the well.

“‘Ask some one why they came, Alli,’ I said.

“‘Who shall I ask?’



THE SECRET OF THE SPHINX



11

11

“To be sure, he could n’t ask the Sphinx and he could n’t ask the donkey, so I continued my sketch, and Alli again fell asleep.

“‘Alli, Alli! there’s another!’ soon I exclaimed, pointing this time to the other side of the little declivity; ‘now you must find out why these people are coming here.’

“The newcomers were a man and woman mounted on a camel, which of course knelt for them to dismount. The man stayed with the beast while the woman went down the bank and positively knelt before the Sphinx. Alli reluctantly moved off, and gradually approached the man, with whom he exchanged various salutations. It was a strange morning scene; a strange combination, — a white painter sketching, a woman kneeling, an Arab interviewing a camel-driver, and a great solemn statue towering above all. By the time Alli was back, the woman had risen and was passing around the foot of the great colossus; then she moved off while he was whispering to me.

“‘Man tell marah queis’ —

“But I shall not try to tell you in his language. The gist of it was that the man was fond of his good, new wife, and that

they had made a long journey to Abou Hone (father of terrors), the god of the rising sun, to implore him to grant their wish that their child might be a son. They believed this wish to be in the power of Abou Hone to grant to those who know the secret.

“I sketched on quietly, with Alli’s fly-brush waving above my head, until suddenly the big white donkey’s bray was answered by a beast which was drawing a sand-cart. The broad wheeler passed, its occupants shouted good-morning, and the information that they were off for an excursion across desert to Sakkarah. Then I shut up my box, and Alli began to saddle the donkey, for he knew our morning’s work was over, that it could never go on in the clouds of dust that the group of Italians coming along would kick up. Yes; here they were, the whole lot of Arabs, Greeks, photographers, beggars, camel-drivers, and guides, whose arrival meant that sightseers from Cairo were on the way, and heralded the beginning of the commercial, begging, howling day at the Sphinx. The beggars will beg, the tourists will form into groups to be photographed, with the Sphinx as a background; that colossus they have

come so far to see will stand waiting their leisure, but all will be too busy being 'taken' to pay him due homage."

"But I don't see what this has to do with your friend Stephens; the letter you received this morning spoke about a moonlight night at the Sphinx, not a morning at the Sphinx," says Sitt, who, since hearing about the beautiful woman in the beginning of the story, is wondering if there may not be another one of whom she has not yet heard.

"There you are, interrupting me again; if you would only wait one moment, you would hear that Stephens was on the porch at the Mina House in the evening, and was among those who heard me tell about the strange women who came to the Sphinx while I was painting that morning. Stephens is one of those practical, matter-of-fact Americans who laugh at anything like legends and traditions. He and his wife were of a camel party which was arranged to ride over to the Sphinx from the Mina House in the warm moonlight after we had finished our coffee and cigars. His wife, who was a bride at the time, wore a white, décolleté gown, and around her neck a

circle of moonstones which caught the light like diamonds. It was so warm that none of us had wraps, and as Stephens's bride rode across the sand on the great white camel, she was so beautiful that she could have been taken for the spirit of the Sphinx which haunts the desert at night."

"There you are again. I knew there must be another beautiful woman in the story because you remember all the incidents so well, and the next time you make a week's sketching trip to Mina House, I am going too. Very strange that you have never told me anything about all this before," exclaimed Sitt, whose jealousy was aroused; "well, what did you all do with your camels, and your beautiful women, and the moonlight, and the moonstones?"

"Oh, well, we did n't do anything. We just rode over to the Sphinx, and round and round it, and up and down, until most of us had had enough, and the Stephenses and I were the only ones who lingered. I suddenly felt *de trop*; I shall never just know why; and as I rode away I looked back and saw Mrs. Stephens run down the incline to the Sphinx, and several times put up her hand to

touch the great colossus; and it is Stephens's letter to-day that brings back the whole thing so vividly. He writes to tell me that he has a son, and asks for my congratulations."

"Well, when you write, tell him that since he himself is now an Abou, he can call the baby little Hone."

## CHAPTER XXV

### SAILING INTO THE LAST YEAR OF A CENTURY

IT is December 31, 1899. We are apparently to pass this last day of the month and last day of the year stuck on a mud-bank in midstream. This time it is Sitt's fault in giving the crew a lot of white bread. They were so afraid that the division would not be fair unless all were present to see it cut into equal parts, that the lookout came from the bow and the reis from the tiller; and only the little cook was giving any attention to the boat. He took the helm, temporarily; but he could not be expected to know how a sand-bar looks under water; so suddenly there was a scraping, crunching sound, a heaving to one side, then to the other, and we brought up on a hidden ridge, for the Nile was never so low, and there is more land than water to sail over.

Sometimes we are lucky enough to scrape hard and run off, but to-day we have evi-

dently come to stay. Aside from loss of time and the extra work it gives the men, the danger to the boat is not inconsiderable, for the bottoms of these houseboats may be many years older than they appear. The timbers are much strained, and the seams opened even by scraping, but when a real bank like the one we are now on is struck, the timbers creak, and groan, and catastrophe seems to be threatened. So far our hull is intact, though we take in water between the seams which has to be baled out repeatedly; but there is no danger of our boat "turning turtle," for the water is not deep enough. The last time we went on a bank we took out nearly twenty buckets—or kerosene cans—of water. We have never been so seriously stranded as on this morning, and Sitt fears that the number of cans we may have to take out will be above the point to which she can count in Arabic. This *terra firma* may be firmer than our boat's bottom, and we may yet have to finish our Nubian voyage on one of the post-boats, leaving the Terrapin to float down when the river begins to rise early next summer.

Notwithstanding that our contract con-



tains a clause exempting us from responsibility in case of accident to our home, our effects are not insured, for that was one of the things we forgot to arrange before starting. The crew have been pushing and pulling, sighing and yelling, for over two hours, without apparently the slightest effect, and Sitt, unable longer to stand it, goes down into the saloon for the Howadji, whom she finds there comfortably curled up in a corner of the wide couch.

“Howadji, something must be done to get this boat off.”

His only reply is to ask her to listen to something interesting he has been reading about Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, — how during the reign of Augustus Cæsar she “was repulsed, with all her followers, by Petronius, who garrisoned Ibrim in 22 B. C., which was held by the Romans till the reign of Diocletian ;” how —

“To begin with,” Sitt retorts impatiently, “I know all that by heart. It is the Ethiopians up on deck who need your attention. Come up and talk like a pacha to them.”

The Howadji still lingers below to light his pipe, and then, after a look up and down

stream through the windows, goes on deck, already determined that what ought to be done is at least to prevent the men pulling in one direction, while the current pushes in another, and the wind in a third. Sitt is angry with the men for being so stupid, angry with Howadji for staying down in the saloon with that one-eyed queen, angrier with him for being able to discern at a glance what should be done,— that we should utilize our sail, which will now do more pulling for us than twenty men.

“Reis, put up sail! Listen, sail up!” she shouts in her best Arabic.

“Sitt say put up sail,” cries Alli.

“Sitt say put up sail,” echoes the cook.

Reis stares at Sitt and then at the sail, evidently puzzled at the order; and not until Sitt tugs at the ropes, and Alli and she half loosen the sheet, does he obey. The sail rattles out, unfurls, fills, and in a moment the boat slips off and rights herself, but heading toward Abou Simbel. The sailors in the water hang on to their tow-line and tumble on board as the reis, once again in an open channel, puts the boat about just as Howadji remarks to Sitt:—

“You do not know how much more comfortable the lounges are when the boat keels over a bit.”

All along this stretch of the river are the ruins of old signal towers; we call them Roman because they are square and solid even though in ruins. They are built of unhewn stone, and are just far enough apart — five miles — to admit of sentinels flashing lights to convey information, — alarm signals much more efficacious and more quickly conveyed than by any kind of messenger.

The Howadji, with faithful Alli at his heels, is off this first morning of 1900 before sunrise to see a temple and get a shot at some pigeons, but he is back early, having found the temple of slight interest and the poor little pigeons scarcely worth the powder. He had an unexpected tramp through the fifteen feet high dūrra after a jackal, which he was lucky enough to get at the first pop, for the jackal would never have let him have another.

New resolutions, new promises to one's self, and all that is so beautifully expressed in Holmes's "Chambered Nautilus," are as uppermost in one's thoughts this first day of

the last year of a century in Nubia as elsewhere on this busy globe; the difference is that far from the haunts of men, one has more opportunity to think things out clearly, and commune with one's self. But there is no difference in the sky, and very little in the landscape between the last day of 1899 and this first day of 1900. There is the same soft air; on shore the same little nude boys and little girls with long fringes — or others so like them that they are indistinguishable.

“There is nothing like a good beginning,” prompts Sitt's American conscience, and no sooner is Howadji off after those pigeons than she is up. She is already a bit conscience-stricken for not having gone to see that temple of Dendūr, but she consoles herself with the thought that it is not one of the best temples, nor yet the second nor the third best, and she is sure that it will be much more interesting after breakfast in Bædeker. She is soon rewarded for remaining behind by quite as interesting sights on board as on the banks above, for a queer vendor of milk and eggs comes alongside to offer her wares. It cannot be asked of her, “Where are you going, my pretty maid?” for she is excessively

ugly. She has a ring in her nose, another in the top of one ear, her voice is shrill, on her feet are red slippers, and she wears a gown which recalls to mind the little woman in Mother Goose whose petticoats were cut off on the king's highway. Why such scant and short skirts, Sitt wonders; is it because she is so ugly that she does not need trailing skirts to keep young Ethiopians from falling in love with her footprints? She is for some time by the boat's side driving her bargain with Awassa, not having seen Sitt, who hides behind the saloon curtain. Just as the sailor is getting the milk at his own price, back comes the Howadji. Instantly the price is doubled — there is now a European in the question, and the milkmaid sees her chance.

The Howadji is in high good humor, having had one or two successful shots, and is vastly amused at the ugly, comical figure; so he forthwith pays her her exorbitant price of three pence for the three quarts of milk. Yet she scolds away until we are out of sight, and whether she thinks she ought to have had more, or whether she is sorry to have us leave, we shall never know.

How are we to celebrate this first day

of the last year of the century? We are about to try to forget that it is a festa, and are just sitting down to lace-making and history, when a little ferry boat crosses our path flying a lot of strange, faded old flags, and we hastily begin to bargain for them in midstream. We offer our price, but the boatmen pronounce it too low; we offer more, they are still not satisfied; the shouting from their boat and ours continues while the distance between us is steadily widening, and we are passing almost out of earshot when they accept our last offer. Then the felucca is got ready, and the men pull away with our money to complete the bargain and get the stuffs. All go but the reis, who is at the tiller, and the lame old widower, who is like the little lame child in the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," too slow to keep up with the crowd. We had closed the bargain at four shillings for the five flags. They are faded enough to be really pretty; two of them are yellow with white bands, one is red with faded green border, another golden brown with light blue stripes, another silver gray which must have once been green or blue. When down they have the tired-out appearance of

flags that have been with brave regiments through many hard-fought battles, but it is the wind of the Nile which has whipped them into this aspect. It should be noted that Alli learned from the little cook — who as usual did not profit by the bargaining — that the crew gave but one shilling to the traders, dividing the other three among themselves. The little cook often tells Alli of things which Alli puts into his pipe and smokes for our benefit.

So we dress ship in honor of New Year's day with our new purchases, which bear Arabic characters for Allah and for Mohammed his prophet. They are strung from the mainmast across the after deck, while the stars and stripes are at the stern ; and one long pennant at the mast, with a large stars and stripes and a large Egyptian flag, completes our spread of bunting. The combined effect is very gay, and arouses great interest among the fellaheen and saquia drivers. We know they are interested, though we are too far off to see their black faces, and we are satisfied that we are doing our share towards honoring Nineteen Hundred.

Since midday we have watched the temple

of Kalabshy in the offing, but we are wind bound, and as four o'clock draws near, we decide to take the felucca and leave the old Terrapin to float down after us. We must have the setting sun on those pylons and fallen columns. What a remnant of a village it is that remains to mark the site of that great capital in the third century!

We cross the river, in which the wind against the current is making real waves, and are drawing to land in our felucca, when an excursion boat passes close to our oars. All on board have their eyes and glasses fixed on the dahabéah flying its strange show of bunting, and never give a glance from the other side of the boat. Among the passengers we recognize friends, but the wind and the noise of the steam-wheeler drown our calls, and had we needed their assistance, we might have perished in midstream before they had caught sight of us. We are keenly disappointed. The steamer whistles and dips her flag, and ours are dipped in return, so we do the correct thing by proxy, but can feel the excursionists wonder why the master and guests of the gayly decked pleasure boat don't show up.



The natives have gathered from far and near alongshore to be ready for the excursionists, and are as disappointed as we that they steam by, leaving Kalabshy for a visit on their return voyage. The natives of Kalabshy are the most enterprising of all we have encountered in Nubia, and have many things of all kinds for sale, — weapons, sticks, silver and tin ornaments, and beads. But we are far more interested in them than in their wares, — in the little boys devoid of any clothing, with their straight backs and lithe limbs, the little girls in their hip fringes, and the older children clad in all kinds of remnants given them by passing excursionists. One is specially amusing in red cardinals and waistcoat worn over blue drawers, his black face powdered over with white dust through which he had run to Kalabshy. He is the clown of the party.

They form a hollow square and escort us to the temple. This is more picturesque and paintable than anything we have seen along the Nubian banks, for the native huts are still built under the eaves, in the corners and angles, while the débris from broken columns, tumbled-in roofs, and shattered walls, all lies

just where it fell. It is the only temple we have seen in either Egypt or Nubia which has not been too much cleaned up and too much restored by some foreign societies. Here one climbs in and over the broken masses, reaching at length the grade of the roof, whence one looks down upon what can in reality be termed a pile. All this is the work of an earthquake, which shook the temple from its foundations almost as a cat shakes a mouse. The Romans appear to have built most solidly, for their wall of well-placed oblong stones running parallel with the river is in parts quite intact. The temple dates from the days of the Ptolemies, and little of the destruction here can be laid to the Christians. How beautiful is the effect of the great trees growing here and there from beneath the broken columns and débris, with the shadow of their branches making graceful tracery on the gray sandstone walls! How beautiful must Karnak have been under the same circumstances, before all kinds of questionable rebuildings and clearings away were ordered! How great its beauty, had not its rebuilder striven to patch up the work of time and iconoclast!

It is easy to trace the scheme of all parts and of the decoration in this ruin of Kalabshy. Though never one of the foremost in beauty of design and execution, it gives more pleasure than many greater temples which have been ruined by ill-advised, badly executed restorations. The squalid little homes in juxtaposition to it remind one of the great difference between the estates of the ruling priests and the slaves at their very doors, who may then as now have cultivated the hundred yard strip between the river and the temple, and made of it a garden with great trees to lend their shade.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE PETIT TRIANON OF NUBIA

RAMADÁN has begun. The Howadji has implored, threatened to give no more backsheesh, and argued, to no purpose. He has explained to the crew that the Koran distinctly says it is not necessary for working men to fast; that only last year the whole Soudanese army had a dispensation from keeping Ramadán. But our crew still fast on, huddled together in the sun; the hearthstone is cold; there is no coffee for breakfast, there are no hot cakes, there is no smoking until after sunset. The forty days of fasting from sunrise to sunset also means feasting and rioting from sunset to sunrise. From the reis of forty years to the little cook of twelve, not a morsel has passed their lips to-day, not even a drink of Nile water. Of course there is little work done all day, and — as we are asleep at night — we are sure that very little is done all night, for over and

above the fact that Ramadán is now their first consideration, the reis has heard that his land and house are in no immediate danger, and it is a matter of no concern to him when we reach Shellal.

Of course, coming as it does this year at a time when the days are short, the fasting is only *en règle* from 6.45 A. M. to 5.15 P. M., but the feasting and rioting all over the land lasts during all the long hours of darkness. The quarreling is incessant, and more divorces take place in this land — where a Mohammedan has but to say three times to his wife, “I divorce you” — during the six weeks of Ramadán than through all the rest of the year.

Alli can be said to be our only comfort, for he does not keep Ramadán; by the Howadji's command, and under compulsion, he is forbidden the pleasure of fasting, but his countenance is none the less sad when he comes to the Howadji with the complaint that the crew call him a Christian.

“If they never call you a worse name than that, you should be happy,” said Sitt.

“Never you mind, never you mind,” is the usual enigmatical reply.

The Howadji declares that he will never again take a crew who do not sign a contract that they will not keep Ramadán, but this determination avails little in the present crisis. The wind, too, is ever against us, and will not even allow us to float down with the current. Boreas's persistency has become wearisome; he forces himself in at every loose door and window, swings the saloon lamp like a merry wedding-bell, and bangs the rowboat every minute or two against the rudder. So with the delights of a long voyage between banks which are not dangerous to the navigator, and where the water is scarcely deep enough to cause anxiety, are mingled some drawbacks.

Kalabshy was the last temple visited yesterday, and last night, during all the sailors' hubbub, we slipped through the Bab-el-Kalabshy, a point to which we had looked forward, where the headlands of rock more nearly approach one another than at any point between Philæ and Wady Halfa. Here the Howadji was to have stopped for a sketch, but before he wakes in the morning, it is already behind us.

Our progress, a mile an hour, has brought

us this morning opposite the ruin of the miniature temple of Kertassi, with its Hathor-headed columns each side of the entrance. It is so dainty, so unique, so exquisitely placed, that it reminds Sitt of the delicate beauty and grace of the Petit Trianon. Here royalty and priests could have played at all the rites of religion, have spent odd seasons resting between the great ceremonials of the great temples, — ceremonials depicted on so many walls, which give in detail the procession of priests, of sacrificial animals, of the king surrounded by followers, with his crown of state on his head, a crown which must indeed, with all its insignia of godlike power, have made the brow weary. Here at Kertassi the greatest king could have worshiped, as it were, *en petit comité*, looking out over the Nile as it sped on and down to his thousands of acres and thousands of subjects. Kertassi enjoys a position almost as unique as the Acropolis. Seen from below with the sky showing between its delicate columns, it is a bijou of a temple; and when looked down upon from the knoll, it appears in conjunction with the opposite

hills and the river far below. Here it stands, half surrounded by old granite quarries, covered with the dust of ages, with no habitation, so far as the eye can reach, save our tiny Terrapin upstream. There are evidences of these quarries being lately worked for some buildings which are to be in Shellal, but the workmen are all away — keeping Ramadán probably; no sound of hammer or crowbar breaks the silence which reigns over all. The stone about Kertassi is, when first quarried, of the whiteness of marble, and bluish in tint, but it turns to rich yellow under continued exposure to the sun's heat. We are told that the stone for certain Philæ temples came from these Kertassi quarries, but it is hard to realize that the temples, which are now almost golden, can ever have been cold and blue and white.

We are tired of fighting the wind, and in the afternoon again come on shore, this time with sailors and guns, for we have seen some wild geese, and perhaps will be lucky enough to have some good shots. Alas! we get no shot; but some one else has had better luck,



for we find the feathers of newly plucked birds in crevices of the rocks. We conclude that the geese will be too cunning to fly this way soon again, and so give up the sport. Howadji wishes to know how long a goose's memory is, but no one can tell him.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE WATCHMAN'S VALLEY

OUR journey is drawing to an end before we find remains of anything antique which is not described in all the guides. We have become so tired of the hurricane which keeps us from floating on our way that anything of any kind is a boon, and when, while wandering on shore, we come to Wady Raffi, the Watchman's Valley, where we find the remains of a small temple with one of its lotus-topped columns still standing and the bases of others still in place, we are as excited as if we had come upon Captain Kidd's treasure. We discover one stone with the ornamentation of the sacred ibis still upon it, and over it the classic frieze of cobra heads.

The stock in trade of the natives at this point differs from that elsewhere, including only a few small bronze coins, a flat stone with a Greek inscription, and a green tomato. We buy the coins and the stone for half a

piastre each, but refuse the tomato even as a gift.

About the site of the temple are the remains of a Roman camp, a piece of Roman wall, and a well. It is only after much questioning that we are told that the place has a name. There must have once been something here worth watching, if there was a watchman, but we can neither find the Watchman's Valley on the map, nor any account of the place elsewhere. As we push off, a woman with covered head and bare legs runs through the shallow water to our boat's side with a broken copper coin, for which she asks half a piastre. We buy it "unsight, unseen," as the boys swap jackknives, for half a piastre is not much to squander even on a counterfeit; and upon after-inspection we find that it bears the name of a governor under Abbassī, Khalif of Egypt, and is of a date about 800 A. D.

We shall certainly return some day to excavate at Wady Raffi. The desire to have one's own little gang of basket carriers and go to work digging in one's own little reservation to find one's own "antiquas" grows stronger and stronger as the everyday life of the present recedes.

The Ramadán quarreling has been noticeable all alongshore this afternoon, and although it is but the first day of the fast, we have had two lamp chimneys, a cup handle, and a saucer smashed, and a pane of glass shattered. If it is to continue at this rate, lucky indeed is it for us that we are nearing the end rather than at the beginning of our cruise.

Just before sundown the sailors wash their hands and feet, say their prayers, and hang over the gunwale of the boat to catch the first glimpse of the new moon. We have assured them all day that the new moon is not due till to-morrow, but they continue to murmur "Elleladey" (this evening). They have kept their fast all day, heedless of our statement that since it is the Sultan in Constantinople who must see the moon and telegraph to all the provinces of the faithful, they need not fast till his order is received.

Still all are intently watching the western sky, and even we are infected with some of their excitement.

"There!" cries Awassa, who of all these long-sighted men seems to see farthest. We strain our eyes, but see not the faintest out-

line of the moon, and it is some moments before others of the crew discern it, and longer still before we finally make it out. It is like a silver thread, along with a brilliant star. All is now commotion. From the shore come sounds of gunshots, which we answer with a succession of shots from our revolver; men shout; children cry; women emit the strange call which is taught them in early childhood, the Zingaree; and even the dogs in the hamlets bark loudly. The first few moments of exultation over, the men break their fast, and silence again reigns along the banks where every human being is in all probability eating as fast as he can. And so ends our first day of Ramadán.

Through the three days' wind-storm we have floated down but five miles each day, and now, her patience gone, Sitt is walking the upper deck disappointed, fretted, and angry. The Terrapin has earned her name; perhaps it would have been more fitting to have called her the "Snail," for even a Maryland diamond-back is fast compared to this boat. The wind against the current makes little white caps, and we float along sideways, and endwise, and often no-wise at all.

Even walking, Sitt declares, would be better than this. The eggs and potatoes have given out, fresh bread, newspapers, and letters are awaiting us at Shellal. Surely, one ought not to attempt such an excursion unless the whole winter and part of the spring were at his disposal. Meanwhile the Howadji, who had no time for reading when at Abou Simbel, is provokingly contented to curl up in a corner of the divan in the saloon, with some history of a thousand years ago in hand, and let the boat go backwards if she will. He tries to curb Sitt's impatience by reminding her that the Khedival ball is never until February, and that there is certainly no danger of missing our return passage across the Mediterranean, since we are not booked till March, which gives us over ten weeks for the accomplishment of the remaining twelve miles of our voyage.

The wind, instead of blowing itself out, having stiffened to a regular gale, driving us upstream in spite of the sail being tightly furled, and of all that the current can do, we are forced to seek shelter and tie up. We find a haven behind an old Roman wall or barrier built many feet out into the river's

bed, which was once the boundary of Egypt. Here we remain until at last the wind goes down with the sun, when the men can take a turn at the oars. They work well for several hours, then all settle to sleep except poor old Reis Mohammed, who squats nobly at his post as he has done for the last few days. All through the hours that we lie stretched in our bunks the old fellow is awake, and every time he puts the rudder about, we hear a strange scraping overhead like the sound which a man who walks with a wooden leg makes. Surely, we should long ago have known if our faithful reis had a wooden leg! But the next morning the sound is explained, for we find that he had a small fire in a brazier, and that each time he moved he dragged the brazier along after him. We are glad that he borrowed from our charcoal, for these nights are very cold; the nearer we approach to Shellal the colder they grow; in the early part, at nine or ten, two light blankets are sufficient covering; towards two in the morning a third would not be uncomfortable; by three it is necessary; by four the sleeper is aroused by a desire for more, and before the sun rises, ten

to one he has utilized all the dressing-gowns, overcoats, and divan covers within reach.

Sitt had rather feared that this would be a *nuit blanche*, for the Howadji has reckoned that the Terrapin can crawl all the way to Philæ before 7 A. M., unless the reis should stop at his native village, some miles short of our destination. To prevent this, the Howadji sleeps with one eye open, and is on deck by four in the morning. It seems that he was actually up with the Southern Cross, which was right over the stern, shining in all its brilliancy until the breaking day caused it to pale and pale, the glory of the one being the disappearance of the other. The general impression that one must travel farther than Kalabshy to see the Southern Cross is an error, for here it is a few miles from Philæ, to be seen until dawn in the month of January; while those who linger in Luxor until April can see it without even setting their alarm clocks at an unusual hour. A pretty little New Zealander, on her way "home" to England, once told us how they had the Southern Cross as a traveling companion from New Zealand all along their journey until they lost it at Suez, and this in the month of February.



It is almost sunrise. The sailors stop rowing, tumble overboard for a morning bath, put on their best gowns, re-roll the white cloths of their turbans, say their prayers, and then are to the oars again instead of going to breakfast, for in Ramadán they are indeed like the snark and breakfast "at five o'clock tea." Now the singing begins; between every vigorous stroke they shout loudly, that their acquaintances alongshore may know they are coming. Just as we approach Shellal the sun bursts upon the tops of the pylons of Philæ, turns all to gold, as it has a way of doing in this wondrous atmosphere of Nubia, and creeps down the side of the hill to the small temple with its unfortunate nickname of Pharaoh's Bed. The Terrapin after all has done nobly — thirteen miles in twelve hours.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE EMERALD HUNTERS

THE name Philæ — the end of the journey, for such is the signification of the word — occurs hundreds of times on the island itself. In fact, says Bædeker, it occurs thousands of times, in spite of which the natives in these days call it Anas-el-Wogud, after one of the heroes of the Arabian Nights. That an island long-time known as sacred should come to be called by such a profane name is surprising in this land where things keep on in the old ruts, just because habit is a deep rut hard to get out of.

All, however, is for the present changed in the neighborhood of this once sacred spot. It must have been always a busy one, since the priests, how many years ago would not be safe to say, had to place an embargo upon the pilgrims who not only came to their shrine, but remained long enough to eat the good men out of house and home, — another

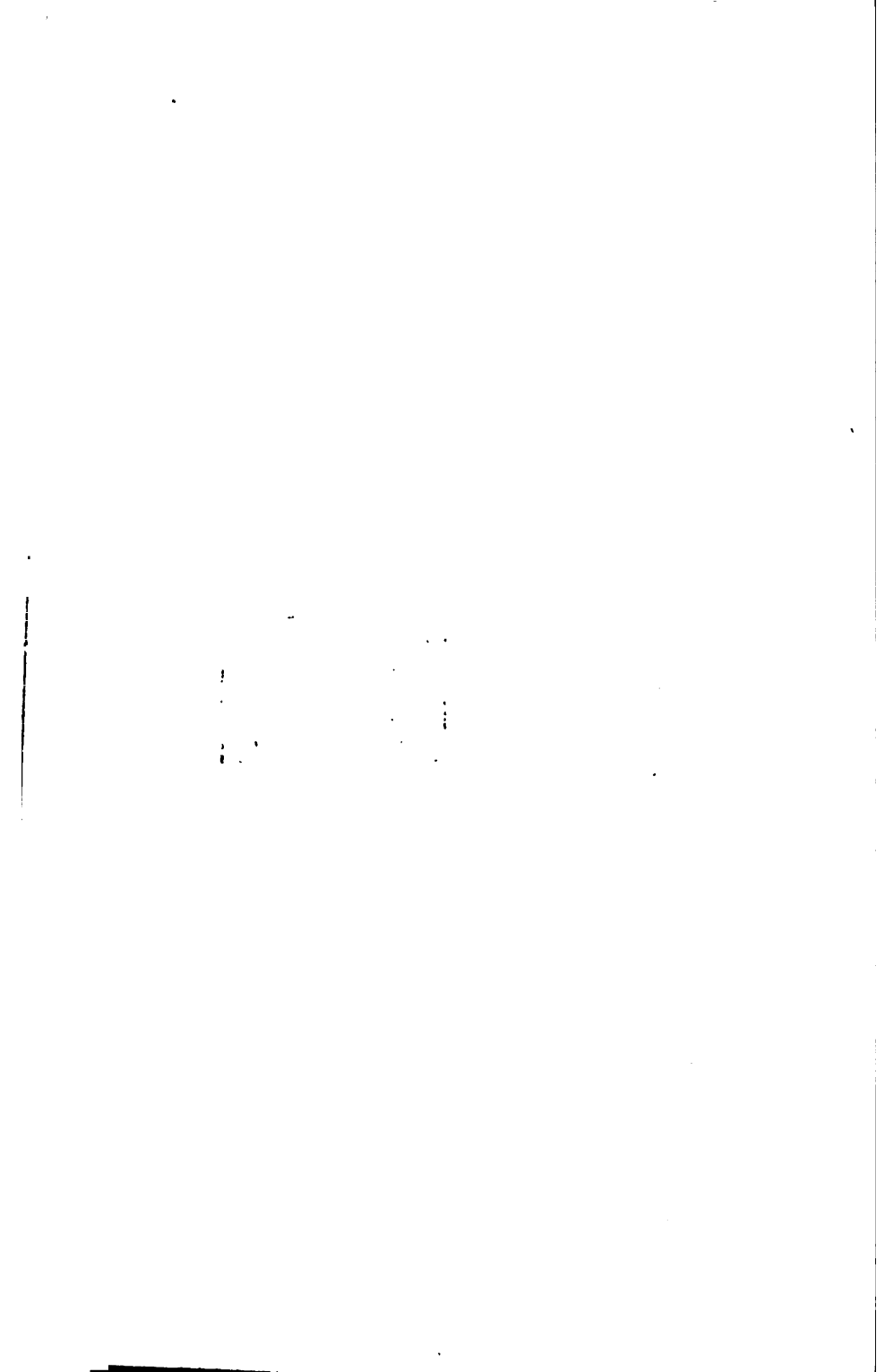
instance of "save me from my friends," for the priests, reduced thereby to poverty, appealed to the hierarchic powers to save them.

What would they think, could they return to their once dainty, much-loved island and see it now? After hundreds of years of quiet and solitude, the surrounding hills resound to the report of blasting rocks and a screaming of little hauling engines. On every point a new tree has grown — the derrick tree. Shellal, with its shanties, its bazaars, its railroad shed, its post-office, its military headquarters, its mixed population of Greeks, Italians, Germans, and Arabs, has sprung up as in a night. This mushroom growth has about six years of life before it, for then the barrage will have been finished, and its waters will have risen, and Shellal will be like a city at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

Four years ago there was not so much as a post-office here; now, when the English mail reaches Shellal, lo! two or three officials and several aids have to "step lively" to sort and arrange it. They dive into as big sacks as any received elsewhere, and bring out great bundles of letters and papers. The



THE TERRAPIN AT PHILÆ



pigeon-holes are more than full, and yet the "Reservoir mail" is not even sorted here, but goes to the sub-office at the Reservoir, where the hundreds of men employees are expecting to hear from their families in almost every point of the globe.

The poor old priests of Philæ were not more put about by pilgrims than the sheik of the cataract is in these days nonplused at the coming of workmen, engines, mining machinery, and every invention for doing quick and substantial work. As the priests called to high officials to deliver them from pilgrims, so the sheik of the cataract, who has for years drawn up dahabéahs and cargo boats, and piloted them down, calls upon the government to deliver him from these men who are building a dam across the river, breaking up his trade and the source of his revenues. His has been an inherited patent. For generations his ancestors may have profited by extorting from the traveler, and now he has nothing to hope for unless, like our old stage-drivers who became conductors on the trains when stages passed away, he becomes a bookkeeper for the new concern.

We are scarcely moored at the foot of the

“Kiosque,” when the Howadji is at work painting in the temple which crowns the hill, the reis is off on a holiday to visit his family, and some of the crew are away on leave of absence, while those remaining are cleaning the boat inside and out, to its surprise as well as their own. They all ask Alli why clean the boat when the voyage is over, but Alli, who knows from his knives, and forks, and tea-things, tells them : —

“Better put boat back clean, find him clean.”

Even Sitt is going for a day’s holiday, — over to that gay centre, Assouan, to see a few white faces, and to find out what new fashions in hair and in hats may have come in during the winter while she has seen only fashions of nose-rings and castor-oiled pig-tails, as children call them. She feels like one of those dug-up things herself, and as if she might begin conversing about Rameses II. or Candace and Petronius, without heeding that all about her are more interested in the new dam, in the new Sirdar, and the Sirdar’s baby.

Still the Terrapin has not lost all her attractions, especially since she lies at a point

from which this sacred island, the "pearl of Egypt," can be seen to advantage in the twilight, and in the moonlight, too. For the little new Ramadán moon is now of some importance, and sheds its lustre into every nook of the long porticoes, galleries, courts, and chambers of the temples, lights even the wall decorations of the goddess Isis. To lie moored near these points is better than camping on the island itself, for one need but lift the eyes to find delight. Of the Kiosque it is better to quote from our old friend Bædeker, who has a way of putting many things in his nutshell paragraphs: "The Kiosque of Philæ has been depicted a thousand times, and the slender, graceful form that greets the eyes of the travelers as they approach the island well deserves the honor. The architect who designed it was no stranger to Greek art, and this pavilion, standing among the purely Egyptian temples around it, produces the effect of a line of Homer among hieroglyphic inscriptions, or of a naturally growing tree among artificially trimmed hedges."

As interesting are some stray lines in Strabo, to the effect that he drove almost to



Philæ in a wagon, then crossed the water in a "pacton" or small boat made of rods woven together. He adds that standing in the bottom of the boat in the water, or sitting on little planks, they crossed easily, "but with some alarm." In these days, the crossing is in such gayly colored boats that they look for all the world like Swiss or German toys. They are of red, with seats of blue, the oars and masts green, the seat covers of variegated cotton, and the awnings striped. They seem to be made *pour rire*, and are heavy with rowlocks of wood, against which the oars clank with noise that can be heard a mile away.

While the Howadji studies up the various sketchable corners, Sitt wanders over the island, finding many a pretty bit of wall decoration, and pieces of stone with pretty designs appearing at intervals upon them, or quarried for altar and libation purposes, no mention of which is in any of the guides, which are naturally devoted to the points of importance, pylons, the colonnade and chambers dedicated to various Egyptian gods. Perched high upon a ladder a workman is busy cutting some English letters into the

wall of the great temple. An English officer superintends the work, for the workman is an Italian, and cannot alone recut the almost erased memorial to some of the English who fell in early battles with the Dervishes. "Old Mortality" cuts slowly on with fine tools and instruments, while the English intelligence at the foot of the ladder oversees.

This inscription is on a side wall. Nothing is injured by using it as a monumental stone to modern armies, while we shall never know what important inscription was cut from the interior of the second pylon to make place for the lines cut deeply just a hundred years ago by Napoleon's soldiers, or by one named Casteix, whose wish it was evidently to have his name in distinguished company. It comes down to us enrolled as a member of the Egyptian Institute, founded by Napoleon in imitation presumably of the French Institute.

"L'an VI de la république, le 13 messidor

Une armée française

Commandée par Bonaparte

Est descendue à Alexandrie.

L'armée ayant mis vingt jours après

Les Mameloucks en fuite au Pyramides,

Desaix, commandant le première division,

Les a poursuivis au delà des cataracts,  
 Où il est arrivé  
 le 13 ventose de l'an VII.  
 Les généraux de brigade  
 Davoust, Friant et Belliard ;  
 Donzelot, chef de l'état-major ;  
 Latournerie, commandant l'artillerie ;  
 Eppler, chef de la 21<sup>e</sup> brigade.  
 Le 13 ventose, an VII de la république ;  
 3 mars, an de J. C. 1799.

Gravé par Costotz, sculpteur."

In De Villier's Egyptian souvenirs we find that the island of Philæ "sustained a five days' siege before the French captured it, though it had been successfully held against the Mamelukes." Assouan and its neighborhood was the scene of battle between the French and the Mamelukes, in which the former captured some fifty boats belonging to the latter, because of contrary winds which prevented their sailing beyond the line of danger. How full of sympathy are we, who have so lately battled with these contrary winds, for the poor Mamelukes! the weakest foe could often have captured our poor little Terrapin as she lay hopelessly waiting for a contrary wind to blow itself out. The Mamelukes fled from Philæ and its

neighborhood to ensconce themselves in our much admired Kasrn Ibrīm further up the river, and left the French to wander at will over Philæ and its neighborhood.

Sketching with the Howadji in the far-famed temple is a "big game man," whose last exploit has been not in hunting lions and tigers, but still bigger game — an emerald mine; instead of wearing tigers' claws on his watchguard, he wears an emerald.

Nine days towards the Red Sea from Assouan by camel are the ancient mines, the only ones known until the conquest of Peru by Pizarro. A concession from the Egyptian government having been obtained, Cornish miners are now on their way to work this old-time El Dorado. All of this has been going on while we were drifting along by the golden sand of Nubia. We read from one of the daily newspapers this interesting story: —

"As far as our evidence goes, the emerald mines have none of the antiquity of their neighbors. It is strange that although Agatharcides and Diodorus have given careful descriptions of the gold mines, not a word escapes them about the emeralds which are found in the same locality. We learn from other sources that they were the only emerald mines known to the ancient

world. Cleopatra had her portrait engraved on emeralds from these mines. No traces of early Egyptian workings have been discovered, and there is no direct evidence in the shape of inscriptions that they were worked in the Ptolemaic era, although rock-hewn temples of that period have been found in their immediate vicinity. The first account of these mines dates from a period some generations subsequent to Omary and Toulon's age. It was discovered by the great Orientalist Quatremère, and consists of the notes of an Arab, of the name of Abderrahman, who was employed as an accountant at the mines. The work was at that time conducted on a large scale, and the system and discipline seem to have been excellent. But in spite of the latter, a good many emeralds were stolen by the men, and the lamentations of the conscientious accountant on this head are quite pathetic. The miners were no longer slaves, but received regular wages from the Sultan. The Bejas, the forefathers of the modern Becharin Arabs, guarded the neighborhood from the attacks of freebooters, for not only the mines but the large reservoirs of rainwater had to be carefully protected. Abderrahman mentioned the various kinds of emeralds found there. One quality was called 'the Western' because it was specially prized by the French, Lombard, and Spanish kings.

"These mines are often spoken of by subsequent Arabic writers, and they afterwards appear to have been farmed out on lease. In 1304 one of these lessees of the mines found an emerald a pound and a half in weight, which he sold to a European prince for £4,800. The mines were worked until 1358, when a decree of the Sultan Hassan forbade any further operations. They

were utterly lost sight of for three hundred years, until they were visited in the seventeenth century by Ibrahim Pasha, who is said to have carried off a vast quantity of emeralds as a trophy of his journey. His success, however, does not seem to have inspired any emulation, for all knowledge of the very situation of the mines faded away until they were rediscovered by Cailliand in 1819. As soon as their situation was ascertained, the problem as to whether they would repay the cost of working had to be solved, but it is still awaiting solution. Mohammed Ali was always on the lookout for mines of every sort and kind, and on the news of Cailliand's success, he at once fitted out an expedition. It was just as fruitless as his similar ventures in Asia Minor and the Soudan. Numerous Greek and Albanian workmen were sent to Gebel Zabbara, a mountain range near the Red Sea littoral, which is honeycombed for more than forty miles with the workings of the ancient miners.

“Unfortunately for the success of the expedition, all Mohammed Ali's enthusiasm was shortly afterwards concentrated on the Soudan, whither Cailliand was commanded to proceed without delay. All attempts at reopening the mines were given up, and the hapless laborers were left to straggle across the desert to the Nile as best they could. The mines were again deserted, but not forgotten. Many have been struck by the tales of their former richness, and, as Egypt became more and more accessible to Europeans, explorers were not wanting. Individual effort was useless, for it was politically and financially impossible for any expedition to be successful unless dispatched under Khedival auspices. Thus it was that Figari, who tried to follow up Cailliand's rediscovery of the mines, was

as unsuccessful as Bruce had been in his efforts to find them in 1778. Accordingly, all the stories about this mysterious 'El Dorado' remained unverified until nine years ago, when the Khedive Tewfik sent an expedition under the direction of Mr. Floyer, who is now Inspector-General of the Egyptian Telegraphs. An account of this expedition was published at Cairo in 1893 under the title of 'Etude sur le Nord-Etbai,' and an epitome appeared in the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Mr. Floyer concludes that there are indisputable proofs of the existence of emeralds, and that it would not be difficult to work the mines again. Some specimens from the mines were sent to a specialist, and he was so favorably impressed that he decided to visit the mines in person. As, however, his attention was immediately afterwards engrossed by some Australian mines, the visit was postponed.

"Such are the outlines of the history of the most celebrated mines in the ancient world. As the traveler on the highway from Europe to the East gazes listlessly in the sultry heat towards the distant coast-line of the Red Sea, he little thinks that the far-off mountains once had wealth compared with which the golden harvests of California and Klondike seem insignificant. From the port of the Golden Berenice argosies sailed laden with their precious freight, — gems destined to find a place in the Imperial diadem, and gold which enabled the Ptolemies to make Alexandria the second city in the ancient world, second only to Rome itself. Those grim mountains and arid valleys are filled with ruins which show that the ages of the mines' fruitfulness must be reckoned not by centuries but by thousands of years. Those lonely hills have been perforated by

the labors of generations of wretched toilers, whose huts still remain clustered in the ravines. Everywhere there are memorials of ages of industry."

When these mines are successfully opened, the natives may, in view of the near failure of the scarab crop, importune the traveler to buy emeralds.

Philæ is deserted at night, for none of the many roofless hovels which still cover the island are inhabited. The keeper and the backsheesh hunters prefer the more antique island of Biggeh, and retire thither with the close of the day. The doves in the trees coo to each other between sundown and moonrise, and the solemnity of the place returns, — solemnity which is lost by day by reason of the numberless excursionists who come by donkey and by train from Assouan. Most of them stop long enough to read the Latin inscription over one of the doors of the Peristyle hall, and to group themselves for photographs.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE END OF THE JOURNEY

DAYS have passed in the study of Philæ and in the seclusion of our little house alongside the sacred island, and now we must be off north. The Howadji sends for the owner of the Terrapin, and after compliments are exchanged, receives his receipt in full, meanwhile informing the wily young Egyptian that, had he time, he would linger to have him prosecuted for cheating us out of two men, imposing upon us a broken-legged one, and for failing in other minor points of his contract; but since he has n't time, he would let him off, — as the fellow knew he would.

After weeks of loitering along the way, it is hard to realize that a railroad time-table is a serious thing, which must be lived up to. In order to get bag and baggage aboard, we must be up betimes in the morning. And so many things must be arranged at the last moment. Backsheesh must not be paid to

our helpers until we are actually aboard the train, otherwise they will slip away to their various villages in the midst of the work, and poor Alli will be more than ever overburdened.

The train for Assouan leaves at 6 A. M., but why should that hour appall us who have been rising often before sunrise? But the fatigue of packing and talking makes us sleep soundly until we are awakened by an unusual noise above stairs. The Howadji opens one heavy eye, and shouts out to know what the racket is all about, and Alli, who has been upsetting all the furniture in his effort to rouse us, answers, —

“Most six 'cl'k, think it late, never you mind.”

But this time we do mind. Fifteen minutes is not long enough for a bath, for breakfast, and for the good-bys to our staunch little boat. We have no time even for a glance at the river, none to sentimentalize over our little Terrapin, none for a parting look at Philæ, and we shall remember it longest as we saw it in the glamour of Bengal lights thrown upon it by some excursionists the night before.

But we catch the train, and as we are off, pay backsheesh into all those outstretched hands, while each mouth broadens into a smile and rows of shining teeth show from ear to ear. Our only pang is their evident pleasure at exchanging our company for those bright, shining pieces of silver. We are still recalling the things we left behind in that hurried flight, and imagining the quarrels the men had over the division of them.

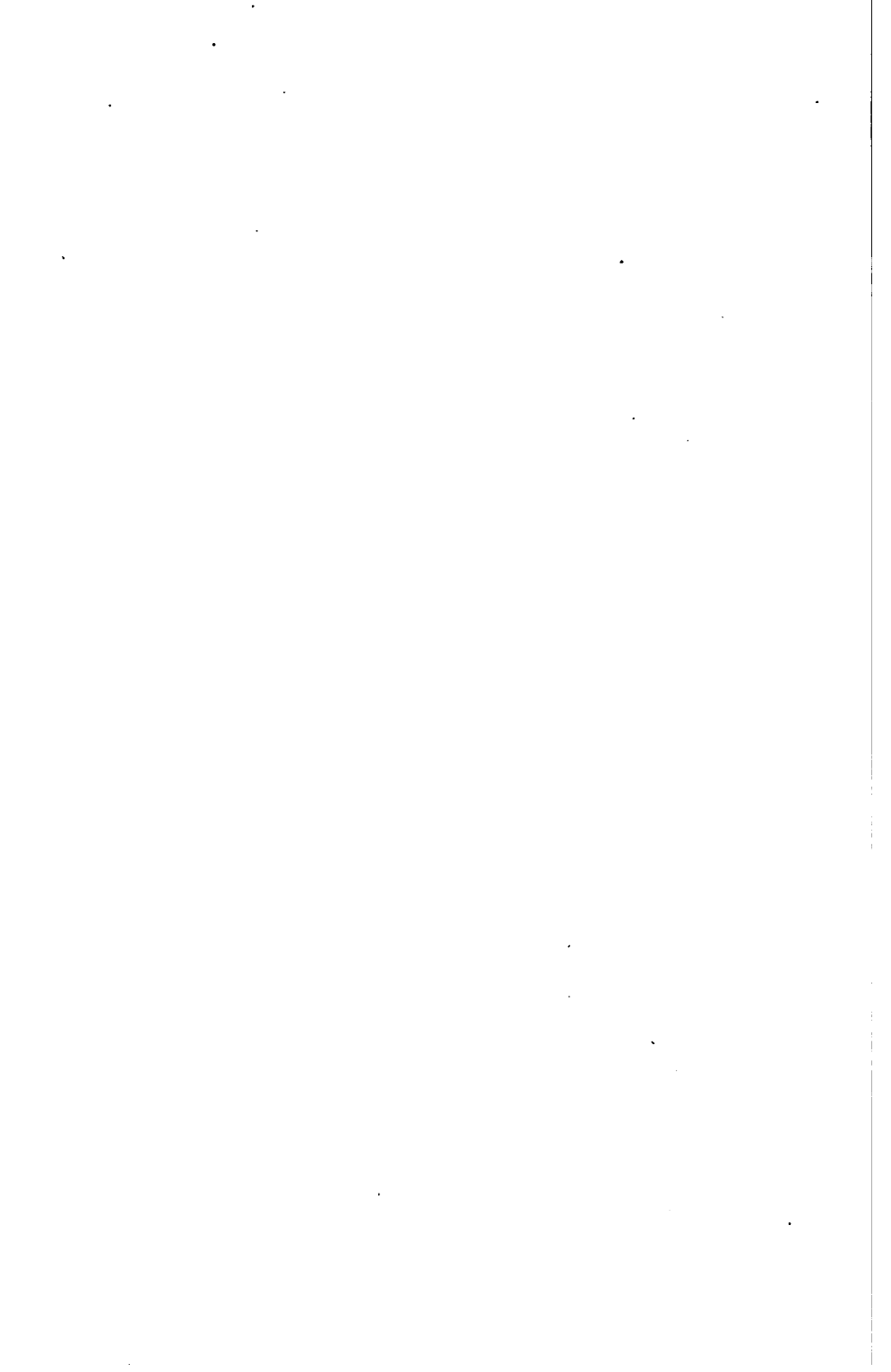
As the train moves slowly away, we hang out of the windows in the hope of catching one more peep at our old friends; but the Terrapin is masked by a row of Greek traders' booths, and the pylons of beautiful Philæ are obscured by the smoke of a modern locomotive.

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